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ABSTRACT

This third review of services for young children in the European Union, undertaken by the European Commission Child Care Network, covers services providing care, education, and recreation for children from birth to 10 years of age. The report is particularly focused on group settings and family day care. The report consists of a summary of main points and four sections. After the summary, Section 1 provides an introduction that sets the context for the review, describes the approach to services, objectives and structure, and the conventions used in the review. Section 2, titled "Background Information," describes parental employment in Europe from 1985-1993; births, child population and one-parent families; and statutory leave arrangement for workers with children. Section 3, "National Profiles," provides a portrait of Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Spain, France, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Austria, Portugal, Finland, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. Section 4, "Conclusions," describes developments since the late 1980s, access to and coherence in services for young children, and training. An appendix contains six tables depicting families; statutory leave for workers with children; and provision of publicly funded services in member states. Figures, tables, and boxed summaries accompany each section. (DR)

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A Review of Services For Young Children in the European Union

1990 - 1995

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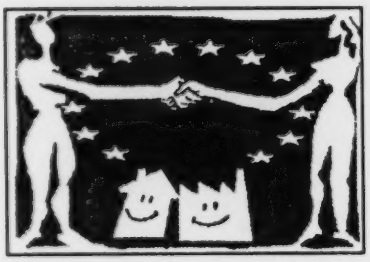

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European Commission Network on Childcare
and other Measures to reconcile Employment and Family Responsibilities

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A Review of Services

for Young Children

in the European Union

1990 - 1995

January 1996

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This report has been prepared by the European Commission Network on Childcare and Other Measures to Reconcile Employment and Family Responsibilities. The contents of the report reflects the opinions of the authors. It does not necessarily represent the European Commission's official position.

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SUMMARY OF MAIN POINTS

Section 1- Introduction

- This is the third review of services for young children in the European Union (EU) undertaken by the EC Childcare Network. It covers services providing care, education and recreation for children aged 0-10 years, with a particular focus on group settings (including schools) and family day care.
- The term 'services for young children' has been used because the term 'childcare services' is problematic. It encourages a narrow approach when considering how children are cared for while parents are at work which may lead, for example, to the contribution of schools being ignored; and it reflects and sustains a divided and incoherent approach to services based on separate systems of 'care' and 'education' - as opposed to an integrated and coherent approach to services which seeks to include all children and all parents, whether employed or not, and to meet a range of needs, including care, through a flexible and multi-functional approach.

Section 2 - Background Information

- Section 2 provides contextual information on: current parental employment in the EU (based on an analysis of the 1993 Labour Force Survey); births, the child population and lone parent families; and leave arrangements for workers with children.
- Employment among mothers grew between 1985-93 in contrast to employment among fathers, which hardly changed or decreased. Despite these trends, fathers are still much more likely than mothers to be employed. The highest levels of maternal employment are in Sweden, Denmark and Portugal, the lowest levels in Ireland and Spain.
- In the EU, 40% of employed mothers have part-time jobs compared to 2% of fathers, but levels of part-time work among mothers vary a lot; they are highest in the Netherlands and the UK and lowest in Greece, Spain, Italy and Portugal.
- Hours usually worked per week average 31 for employed mothers and 43 for employed fathers. Mothers in the UK and the Netherlands work the shortest hours; mothers in Greece, Spain and Portugal work the longest. Fathers in the UK and Ireland work the longest hours, 6-7 hours a week longer than fathers in Belgium, Denmark, Germany and Italy.
- In 1993, there were 43 million children aged 0-10 years in the EU.
- The fertility level in the EU is at an historically low level, well below replacement level. The highest levels of fertility are in Sweden and Ireland; lowest levels in Germany, Greece, Italy and Spain.
- Women and men are having children at ever later ages. Together with employment trends, this is creating an increasing concentration of work (paid and unpaid) on the 25-49 age group. The use and distribution of time - between women and men, between the employed and unemployed, over the life-course and between employment, caring and other activities - are becoming critically important issues throughout the EU.
- Throughout the EU, the number of lone parent families are increasing. The highest levels

are in Denmark, Austria, Sweden and the UK, lowest levels in Greece, Italy and Spain.

- All countries make some provision for women to take leave at the time of the birth of their child; in most cases, this leave lasts between 8-14 weeks after the birth and is paid at a high earnings-related level. The main exception, in terms of length and payment, is the UK. Only 3 countries offer a period of paid Paternity Leave lasting more than a week; most Member States offer no entitlement to Paternity Leave.
- Most Member States offer a statutory right to some form of Parental Leave; the exceptions are Ireland, Luxembourg and the UK. However, statutory Parental Leave schemes vary considerably, with respect to: length; when leave can be taken; flexibility; whether and how parents taking leave are paid; and whether leave is treated as a family entitlement or as an individual right.
- Eight Member States offer some form of Leave for Family Reasons, giving parents the right to take time off work to care for a sick child. There are considerable variations with respect to length and payment.

Section 3 - National Profiles

- National profiles for each of the 15 Member States are presented in a common format, which includes: a description of the system of services for young children including staffing standards and costs and funding; levels of publicly-funded provision; information on how children are cared for while parents are at work; main developments in services since 1990; a personal assessment by the Network member of the current situation in her or his country; and a glossary of the terms used in the language of that Member State for the main types of services and different types of workers.

Section 4 - Conclusions

- Since the late 1980s, there have been three specific events, with major implications for services for young children: the reunification of Germany; the major reform of the Spanish education system, which brought all services for children aged 0-6 years within the education system; and the accession of Austria, Finland and Sweden to the EU.
- Most countries have achieved or are moving towards comprehensive publicly-funded services for children aged 3-6 years either in pre-primary schooling or *kindergarten;* the main exceptions are Ireland, the Netherlands and the UK.
- Levels of provision in services for children under 3 years and in services providing care and recreation for school-age children vary more between Member States and are generally far lower than pre-primary schooling or *kindergarten;* the gap between supply and demand is greatest for these services. Four main policy objectives concerning the care of children under 3 can be identified: actively promoting choice between employment and caring for children at home through public measures supporting both options; recognising the importance of choice, but treating it as a private matter; supporting parents in employment after 12-15 months leave; and encouraging parents to remain at home until children are 3.
- Overall, publicly-funded services are most developed in Denmark and Sweden, followed by France; and least developed in Ireland, Greece, Spain and the UK.

- A number of countries (Denmark, Belgium, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal and Sweden) showed substantial increases in some sectors of their publicly-funded provision between the late 1980s and the mid 1990s, in most cases involving a a significant role played by national government in stimulating growth. The UK showed substantial growth in private, non-subsidised services.
- In Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Germany and Spain a national commitment or statutory entitlement to a place in a publicly-funded service was introduced or extended for certain age groups of children - although not necessarily fully implemented.
- There are a number of other developments which, though not general, have occurred in several countries: a search for greater diversity in services; encouraging more parental involvement; improved training for workers in services; changes in starting ages and/or hours of compulsory schooling; an evolving relationship between schools and services providing care and recreation for school-aged children; expansion or development of subsidies paid direct to parents to reduce their costs in using services (eight countries provided some subsidy either to all parents or certain groups at the end of 1995).
- Services for young children vary between Member States on a number of dimensions: the relative contribution of formal and informal provision (in general, the contribution of informal services drops as employment and the provision of formal services increase); the balance between subsidised and non-subsidised services (with highest levels of public subsidy in the Scandinavian countries and France); the role of employers (with highest levels in Belgium, France and Netherlands); and the relationship between the welfare and education systems.
- In most Member States, services for children below compulsory school age are divided between the education and welfare systems; the main exceptions are the Scandinavian countries and Spain, where services have been integrated within one system - welfare in the former case, education in the latter. The welfare/education split found in most countries creates differences and inequalities - lack of coherence - between services, and is becoming ever harder to justify. A coherent and integrated system, offering flexible and multi-functional services, should be more able to adopt a holistic approach to children and families, recognising the breadth and inter-connectedness of their needs (eg. for care, education, health, socialisation, support, recreation).
- Staffing levels in services for young children vary considerably between Member States. There is also a wide range of basic training among workers; lowest levels of training are often found among workers in services in the welfare system and workers who provide services for children under 3 years (the two groups often coincide). Family day carers, who play a major role in providing services for this youngest age group of children, have the poorest training levels of all, below that found among centre-based workers.
- This situation raises four main issues: Is it appropriate to have lower levels of training for staff working with children under 3 and in services in the welfare system? What degree of age specialism should there be in training? What levels of training should be required for workers in non-subsidised private services, including family day carers? Should workers be trained to have a very specialist role (eg. a teacher) or to undertake a wider role, covering a range of tasks with children, parents and the local community?

SECTION 1 - INTRODUCTION

The EU context for this review

This is the third review of services for young children in the European Union (EU) undertaken by the European Commission Network on Childcare and Other Measures to Reconcile Employment and Family Responsibilities (referred to below as the 'EC Childcare Network'). The first review - ***Childcare and Equality of Opportunity*** - was conducted by the Network soon after it was established by the Commission's Equal Opportunities Unit in 1986, and was published by the Commission in 1988. The second review - ***Childcare in the European Communities 1985-1990*** - was published in 1990. This review covers developments during the period from 1990 to the end of 1995.

Since 1990, there have been a number of important developments at the EU level. Austria, Finland and Sweden have joined the EU and they are included in this review.

The EU itself has steadily developed its interest in services for young children, at both a policy and funding level. The ***Third Community Action Programme on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men*** began in 1991. The Programme re-stated the need for 'childcare provision' to facilitate the integration of women with children into the labour market, and included a Community Initiative to increase employment and training opportunities for women; the NOW Initiative made available Structural Fund money specifically for the provision of 'childcare services' and the training of 'childcare workers'. The Third Equal Opportunities Programme also gave the Childcare Network the specific task of "*monitoring developments*"; this review has been prepared as part of that remit.

In March 1992, the Council of Ministers adopted a ***Recommendation on Child Care***, which committed Member States to "*take and/or progressively encourage initiatives to enable women and men to reconcile their occupational, family and upbringing responsibilities arising from the care of children*". The Council Recommendation identifies four areas where initiatives are necessary: leave arrangements for parents, making the workplace responsive to the needs of workers with children, supporting increased participation by men in the care of children - and services to provide care for children with parents in employment or training or seeking employment or training. In Article 3, which deals with these services, the Recommendation identifies some important principles that should underlie services. They should be:

- affordable and available in all areas, rural as well as urban;
- accessible to children with special needs;
- combining reliable care and a pedagogical approach;
- flexible, diverse but coherent;
- based on workers whose training, both basic and continuous, is "*appropriate to the importance and social and educative value of their work*".

The pre-amble to the Recommendation also states the more general principle that "*it is essential*

to promote the well-being of children and families, ensuring that their various needs are met"

In 1994 the Commission published its White Paper on European Social Policy, ***A Way Forward for the Union,*** committing itself to "*follow up the Childcare Recommendation by assessing the implementation of the Recommendation, establishing baseline data on childcare infrastructure and services in the Member States..*[and to] *undertake an economic assessment both of the job-creation and reflationary potential of* [childcare] *infrastructures and services*". In 1995, in the ***Fourth Medium-Term Community Action Programme on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (1996-2000)***, the Commission noted that "*knowledge of existing standards in terms of quality and quantity of child care...would be useful for the development of employment policies in the area* [of reconciliation of employment and family responsibilities] and further committed itself "*to propose measures aiming at setting higher standards for the care of children*". The Network hopes that this review will contribute to these tasks.

The approach to services taken in the review

The main concern of the European Commission has always been the need for services that offer safe and reliable care for children to enable their parents to work or train, so as to promote equal opportunities for women and men in the labour market. Some services (for example, nurseries and family day care) are traditionally associated with the task of providing care for the children of employed parents; they are usually what people have in mind when they refer to 'childcare services'. But safe and reliable care is also provided by other services, in particular in schools or kindergartens, which in much of the EU are now available to most children from the age of 2 or 3 onwards. Indeed, in the EU schools probably provide more hours of care than 'childcare services' - although schools may not always recognise or value this important role. This fact alone has led the Childcare Network to adopt a broad approach to services in its reviews, including schools and kindergartens as well as 'childcare services'.

But there are other reasons for taking a broad approach. From a service perspective it is neither necessary nor obviously desirable to treat employed parents and their children separately from other children and parents. Parents who are neither employed nor looking for employment may still require safe and reliable care for their children, for example to enable them to get on with unpaid household work or simply to have a little time for themselves. The employment status of parents can also change over time. They may become unemployed or take Parental Leave, resume employment, resign to undertake training and so on. Services provided specifically for employed parents cannot respond to these changing circumstances and may impose damaging discontinuities on children and parents.

Finally, parents, whether employed or not, have other common needs which services providing care can help to meet; for example, services can be an important source of social support for parents. Children have common needs whether or not their parents are employed, for example for learning, socialisation and recreation; services providing care can also meet these needs. The Council Recommendation on Child Care partly recognises the importance of services adopting a holistic and multi-functional approach to children and parents when it says that 'childcare

services' should "*combine reliable care from the point of view of health and safety with...a pedagogical approach*".

In this context the term 'childcare services' is problematic. It encourages a narrow approach when considering how children are cared for while parents are at work; this may lead, for example, to the contribution of schools in providing care being ignored. The term 'childcare services' reflects and sustains a divided and incoherent approach to services based on separate systems for 'care' and 'education' - as opposed to an integrated and coherent approach to services which seeks to include all children and all parents, whether employed or not, and to meet a range of needs through a flexible and multi-functional approach.

This review therefore deliberately avoids the term 'childcare services', opting instead for the more inclusive term '**services for young children**'. By '**young children**' we mean children under 10 years. By choosing this age group, the Childcare Network does not imply that reconciliation of employment and bringing up children ceases to be an issue at this age: the Council Recommendation on Child Care rightly observes that "*responsibilities arising from the care and upbringing of children continue up to and throughout the period of children's schooling*". However, our choice does recognise that, as children get towards this age, there are new and rather different issues to be considered about what they need if they have parents at work and how it can best be provided.

What these 'service for young children' all have in common is that they provide non-parental care for children - though whether this is a recognised function and the importance attached to it may vary. But they may also offer some or all of a range of other functions for children and parents including: learning; socialisation; recreation; and support. This broad heading covers many services. There is a wide range of group settings, for example: centres for children aged 0-3 or 3-6 years; age-integrated centres for children from 0-6 years or older; centres providing care and recreation for school-age children; and schools for children of compulsory school age and younger. There are also services provided by individual carers, for example: family day carers, who take children into their homes; carers who come into the child's home; and care by relatives and friends.

The review focuses on services in **group settings** and **family day care**. Carers who work in children's own homes and less formal care arrangements involving relatives and friends are clearly important in many countries. But for reasons of space, and because there is often little information available about these carers, the report pays less attention to them; for example they are not included in the glossary of terms for workers in services.

The review includes services that are entirely privately funded. But it pays most attention to services that are wholly or partly publicly funded, whether managed by public authorities or private organisations. A focus on these services is justified given the EU's commitment to the principle that services should be affordable.

The objectives and structure of the review

The main objectives of this report are to review services for young children in the European Union in the mid-1990s and the main developments in these services since 1990. The core of the report is a series of **national profiles** for each Member State **(Section 3)**. These national profiles are presented in a common format, to make it easier for readers to find information and make comparisons. Each profile includes:

- a description of the system of services including staffing standards and costs and funding[1];
- levels of publicly-funded provision;
- information on how children are cared for while parents are at work;
- main developments between 1990 and 1995;
- a personal assessment by the Network member of the current situation in her or his country.
- a glossary of the terms used in the language of that Member State for the main types of services and different types of workers.

The national profiles are preceded by some important **contextual information (Section 2)**, including:

- the current parental employment situation in the European Union;
- births, child population and lone parent families ; and
- leave arrangements for workers with children.

Section 4 presents **conclusions**, which discuss some of the main developments in services from the late-1980s to the mid-1990s and relate the situation in the Member States to some of the main principles proposed in the Council Recommendation on Child Care. This section includes a 'league table' of levels of publicly-funded provision in the different Member States - which should, however, be read with caution and in conjunction with the qualifications outlined in Section 4. The review does not include recommendations on services for young children; these can be found in the Network's other reports. The review concludes with an **Appendix**, which includes six **detailed Tables.**

Conventions used in the review

Age ranges of children are mentioned frequently in the report. Examples illustrate the convention used, to avoid confusion. 'Children aged 0-3 years' covers children from birth up to 36 months, ie. up to their third birthday - but does not include 3 year olds. 'Children aged 3-6 years' covers children from 36 up to 72 months, ie. up to their sixth birthday - but does not include 6 year olds. 'Children aged 6-10 years' covers children from 72 up to 120 months.

The term **private organisation** refers to non-profit organisations. They can vary from small

[1]For further information on staffing standards and costs and funding, see EC Childcare Network (1995) *The Costs and Funding of Services for Young Children*, Brussels, European Commission Equal Opportunities Unit.

parent or community groups to large regional or national organisations.

The following **generic terms have been used for services in the welfare system**:

- centre for children aged 0-3 years;
- centre for children aged 3-6 years;
- centre providing care and recreation for school-aged children;
- age-integrated centre (ie. provides for children aged 0-3 and 3-6 years or for children aged 3-6 years and school-aged children or for children aged 0-6 years and school-aged children);
- family day care (individual carers who provide care for non-related children in the carer's own home). The term 'organised family day care' is used to describe a service where family day carers are recruited, employed and supported by a public authority or publicly-funded private organisation. Alternatively, family day carers are self-employed and make private arrangements directly with parents.

The following **generic terms have been used for services in the education system**:

- pre-primary schooling (for school provision exclusively for children below compulsory school age)[2];
- primary schooling (provision for children of compulsory school age).

The following **abbreviations are used for Member States**:

- BE = Belgium;
- DK = Denmark;
- DE = Germany (W = West; O = East);
- EL = Greece;
- ES = Spain;
- FR = France;
- IR = Ireland;
- IT = Italy;
- LX = Luxembourg;
- NE = Netherlands;
- OS = Austria;
- PO = Portugal;
- SU = Finland;
- SV = Sweden;
- UK = United Kingdom.

Member States are also presented in this order.

[2]For further information on pre-primary education, see European Commission (1995) *Pre-school Education in the European Union - Current thinking and provision*, Luxembourg, Office for Official Publications of the European Union.

The work of the Network since 1990

Since 1990, the Childcare Network has published a series of reports on specific issues concerning **services for young children**, including: family day care services; services providing care and recreation for school-age children; the childcare needs of rural families; information for monitoring services; and the costs and funding of services. These reports, together with articles written by Network members in the 1992 and 1993 Annual Reports of the Network, provide more detail on many subjects which only receive brief attention in this review. They also include wide-ranging recommendations.

The Network has also developed a programme of work on quality in services for young children. The output from this programme includes a discussion paper ***Quality in Services for Young Children***; a report putting forward ***Quality Targets in Services for Young Children;*** and a video ***Can you feel a colour?,*** which shows examples of good quality services drawn from Denmark and Northern Italy.

The Network has also undertaken work in other areas covered by the ***Council Recommendation***, in particular **measures to support increased participation by men in the care of children** and **leave arrangements for workers with children.** This includes the publication of a discussion paper on men working in services for young children; a report on two projects (in Italy and the UK) which have set out to involve fathers more in nursery centres and to use these centres as places to help mothers and fathers explore gender roles and identities; and a review of leave arrangements in the EU and Norway. Leave arrangements are very relevant to any consideration of services for young children; for example, as the current review illustrates for several Member States (eg. Denmark, Austria, Finland, Sweden), Parental Leave can affect the demand for services given the right conditions and circumstances.

Overall, this broad programme of work by the Network illustrates that the reconciliation of employment and caring for children requires a broad approach. Services providing care for young children should not be considered in isolation from other policy areas. The recognition of the need for this broad approach to reconciliation is one of the strengths of the ***Council Recommendation on Child Care.***

Details of these and other Network publications are available from members of the EC Childcare Network (see the back of this report for their names and addresses) or from the European Commission Equal Opportunities Unit (DGV/A/3), 200 rue de la loi, B-1049 Brussels, Belgium.

SECTION 2 - BACKGROUND INFORMATION

To make sense of services for young children, it is necessary to place them in national context. There are many relevant parts to this context - cultural, demographic, economic, political and social - and this section of the review considers only three, although the three are of particular relevance. First, the employment situation of men and women with children. Second, a number of demographic items concerning the child population and structure of families. Third, the extent and nature of leave arrangements for workers with young children. Each has a direct and major bearing on need, demand and use of services for young children.

Parental Employment in Europe 1985-1993

In previous reviews of services, the Childcare Network has summarised the parental employment situation in the EU. It has also prepared two separate reports analysing parental employment in the EU in some detail. The source of this information has been special analyses of the 1985, 1988, 1990 and 1991 Labour Force Surveys (LFS) undertaken for the Network by the Statistical Office of the European Communities (EUROSTAT).

We begin this section with a further brief summary of parental employment, including results from the 1993 LFS (taken again from an analysis conducted for the Childcare Network by EUROSTAT) and developments over the period of 1985-1993[3]. The 1993 LFS data does not include the new Member States; references to Austria, Finland and Sweden are based on national sources of data, which are not necessarily comparable with the LFS. Comparisons from 1985 to 1993 cannot be made for Portugal, Spain or the former East Germany.

Mothers' employment

Employment trends 1985-93

- During the period 1985-1993, there were several years of overall employment growth in the EU, followed by three years of declining employment after 1990; 1985 and 1993 were, therefore, both low points for employment[4]. Despite these general trends, employment among women with young children increased in 9/10 countries for which there is 1985-93 data; the only country where employment fell was Denmark. The largest increases were in Ireland, the Netherlands (in both countries employment rates nearly doubled) and the UK, all of which grew from relatively low levels. Both Spain and Portugal also show increases between 1988 and 1993 (Figure 1a; Table 1).

[3]For further information on parental employment, see Rubery, J., Smith, M. and Fagan, C. (1995) *Changing Patterns of Work and Working-time in the European Union and the Impact on Gender Divisions*, Brussels, European Commission Equal Opportunities Unit.

[4]More detailed information on overall employment in the EU and employment trends is provided in the annual report on *Employment in Europe*, produced by the Directorate General for Employment, Industrial Relations and Social Affairs and published by the Office for Official Publications.

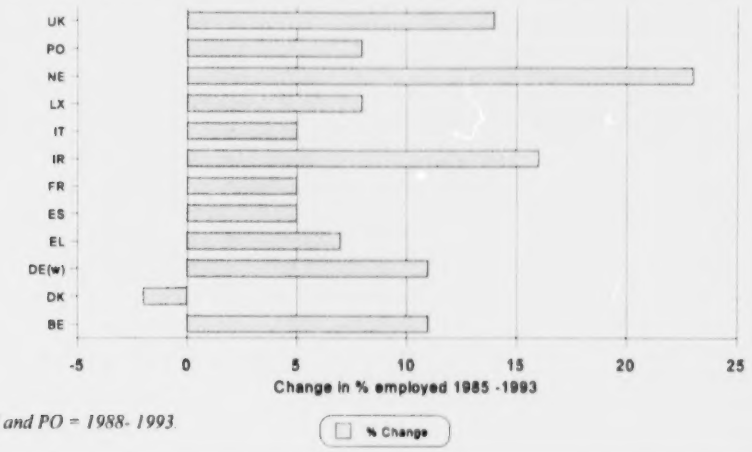
- In Belgium, Germany, France and the Netherlands, growth in women's employment during the period was mainly due to increased part-time employment. In Italy, Luxembourg and the UK there was similar growth in full-time and part-time employment. While full-time employment accounted for most of the growth of employment in Greece, Spain, Ireland and Portugal. Denmark had a substantial growth in full-time employment and a substantial fall in part-time employment (Table 1).

Employment in 1993

- Half of all mothers in the EU (excluding the new Member States) were employed and just under a tenth were unemployed but looking for work; the remaining two-fifths were economically inactive, outside the labour market. Within this global figure, there were considerable variations in employment rates between individual Member States. Sweden, Denmark and Portugal had the highest levels with over 70% of mothers employed (and Portugal rapidly closing the gap with Denmark since 1988), followed by Finland (65%) and Belgium (62%). Ireland and Spain, with less than 40%, had lowest employment levels. A break-down for Germany in 1993 shows that the former East Germany had one of the highest employment rates for women with a child under 10 in the EU (69%) and a full-time employment rate (59%) only surpassed in Portugal; employment rates for mothers remained far higher in former East Germany compared to former West Germany (69% v 46%) (Figure 1b; Table 1).
- Women with a youngest child under 3 have lower employment rates than women whose children are all aged over 3 (with the exception of Ireland). This difference in the EU overall and in most individual countries is less than 10%. It is however significantly higher in two countries - Germany and the UK - although this 'age effect' differential in the UK fell substantially between 1991 and 1993 reflecting fast employment growth among women with very young children (Figure 2; Table 2).
- National comparisons must take account of the considerable variations which exist in the extent of part-time employment and hours actually worked. In the EU, 40% of employed mothers - a fifth of all mothers - have part-time jobs. But in the Netherlands and the UK, the proportion is two-thirds or more; while in Greece, Spain, Italy and Portugal, the proportion is 15% or less. Other countries vary between 26% and 49%. In Germany, nearly half of employed mothers have part-time jobs; but most employed mothers in the east had full-time jobs in 1993 (80%), while most employed mothers in the West worked part-time (60%) (Figure 1b; Tables 1 & 3).
- The **proportion of mothers unemployed** in 1993 was 8% for the EU (excluding the new Member States). The highest level (19%) was in the former East Germany; while 10% of mothers or more were unemployed in Denmark, Spain, France and Finland. The **unemployment rate** (ie.the numbers unemployed as a percentage of the economically active population) is significantly higher than the proportion of mothers unemployed because many mothers are economically inactive. In the EU (excluding the new Member States), the unemployment rate was 14%, and it was over 20% in the former East Germany (21%) and Spain (29%) (Figure 1b;Table 1).

Figure 1a

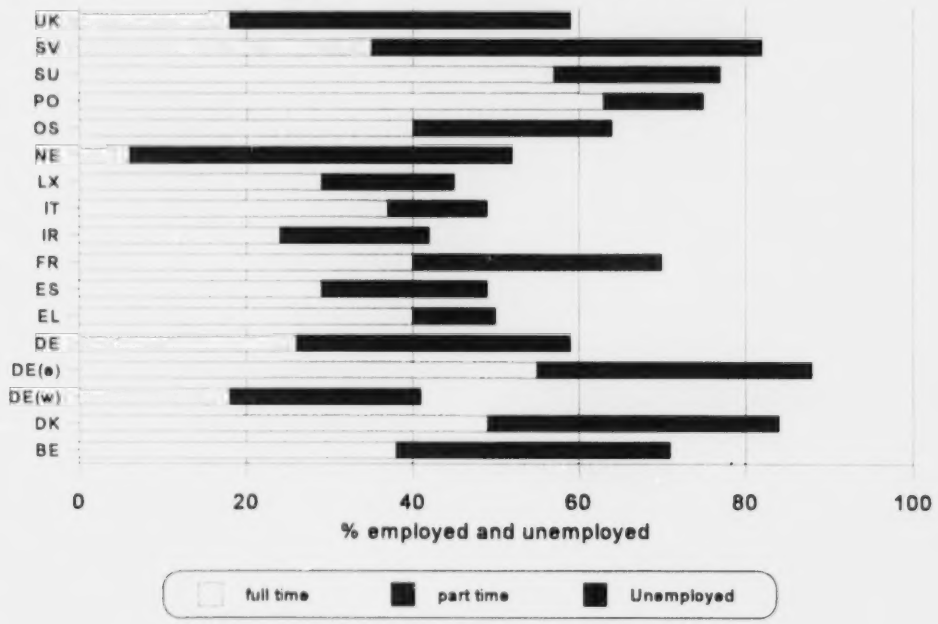
Change in employment among women with a child under 10: 1985-1993



NB. ES and PO = 1988- 1993

Figure 1b

Employment and Unemployment among women with a child under 10: 1993



NB. OS = Women with child under 15, no information on unemployed.
SV= Women with child under 7.

Working Hours

- In the EU (excluding the new Member States), the normal working week for **part-time** employed mothers averaged 19 hours in 1993, but working hours varied considerably between Member States. Part-time employed mothers worked particularly short hours in the Netherlands and the UK, averaging 16 hours a week, compared to 26 hours in Denmark and 24 hours a week in Greece, France and Portugal (Table 3)
- There is less variation in hours worked by mothers with **full-time** jobs. The average for the EU is 39 hours a week, ranging from 41 hours (in the Netherlands and Portugal) to 36 in Italy (Table 3)
- Overall, including part-time and full-time employment, employed mothers in 1993 worked on average 31 hours a week, ranging from under 25 hours (Netherlands and UK) to over 35 hours (Greece, Portugal and Spain) (Figure 3; Table 3).

Fathers' employment

Employment trends 1985-1993

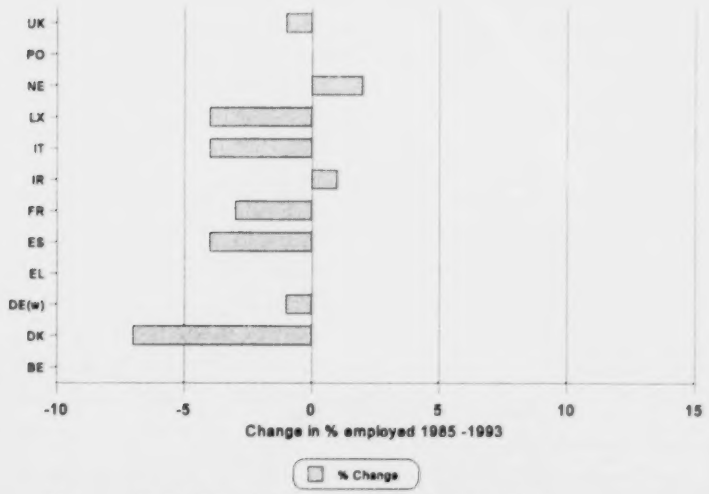
- Employment among men with young children fell by more than 1% in Denmark, France, Italy and Luxembourg. It changed very little in Belgium, West Germany, Greece, Ireland and the UK. The increase in the Netherlands was entirely due to growth in part-time employment. Between 1988 and 1993, employment fell among fathers in Spain and was unchanged in Portugal. Overall, the most common trend was for a fall in full-time employment and a small increase in part-time employment (Figure 1c; Table 1).

Employment 1993

- Despite falling or static employment, nine out of ten fathers in the EU (excluding the new Member States) were employed and most of the remainder were looking for work. Only 4% were economically inactive - compared to 41% of mothers. In Germany, the employment rate for employed fathers was slightly higher in the West (93%) than in the East (90%) (Figure 1d; Table 1)
- Although employment rates among fathers varied less than for mothers, there was some difference. Three countries (Spain, Ireland and the UK) had overall employment rates of 85% or less and in Denmark the rate was 88%. Italy, Greece and Portugal had 93% or more of fathers employed (Figure 1d; Table 1).
- Nearly all fathers have full-time jobs (88% compared to 30% of mothers). In only one country (the Netherlands) do more than 5% of fathers have part-time jobs. Mothers are ten times as likely to have part-time jobs (Figure 1d; Table 1).
- The **proportion of fathers unemployed** was slightly less than mothers. However, the **unemployment rate** for mothers was twice the rate for fathers (14% compared to 7%) because far more mothers are economically inactive. Highest levels of unemployment among fathers, over 10%, were in Spain, Ireland and the UK (Figure 1d; Table 1).

Figure 1c

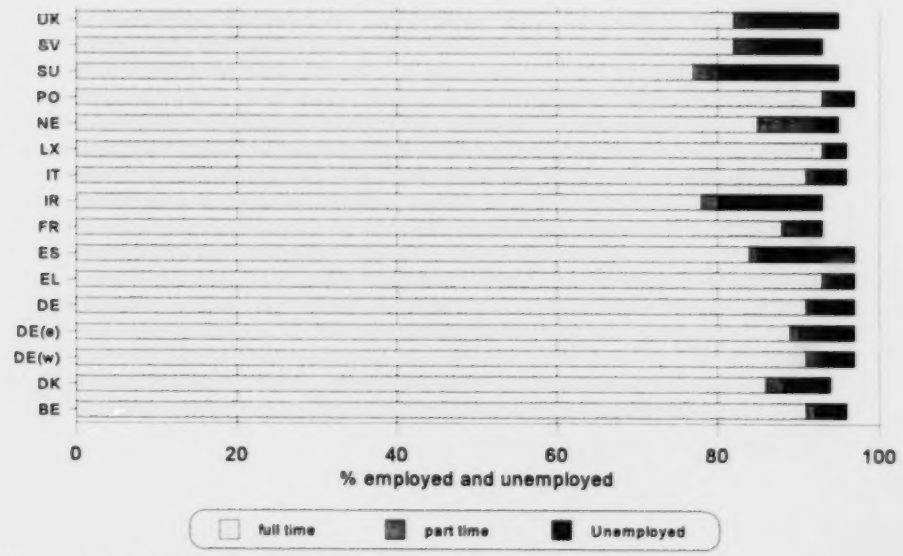
Change in employment among men with a child under 10: 1985-1993



NB: ES and PO = 1988- 1993; PO, EL and BE = < 0.5%

Figure 1d

Employment and Unemployment among men with a child under 10: 1993



NB: SV = Men with a child under 7.

Working hours

- The normal working week for the small number of **part-time** employed fathers averaged 25 hours in 1993, five hours more than for part-time employed mothers.
- **Full-time** employed fathers averaged 43 hours a week, 4 hours more than full-time employed mothers. Full-time employed fathers in the UK and Ireland averaged the longest working week (nearly 48 and 47 hours respectively), while the shortest full-time hours were worked by fathers in Belgium, Denmark, Italy and Germany (40-41 hours).
- Including all employed fathers, whether working full-time or part-time, the average time usually worked per week was 42.7 hours; but this varied from 47 hours per week in the UK to 41 hours per week in Netherlands, Belgium and Denmark (Figure 3; Table 3).

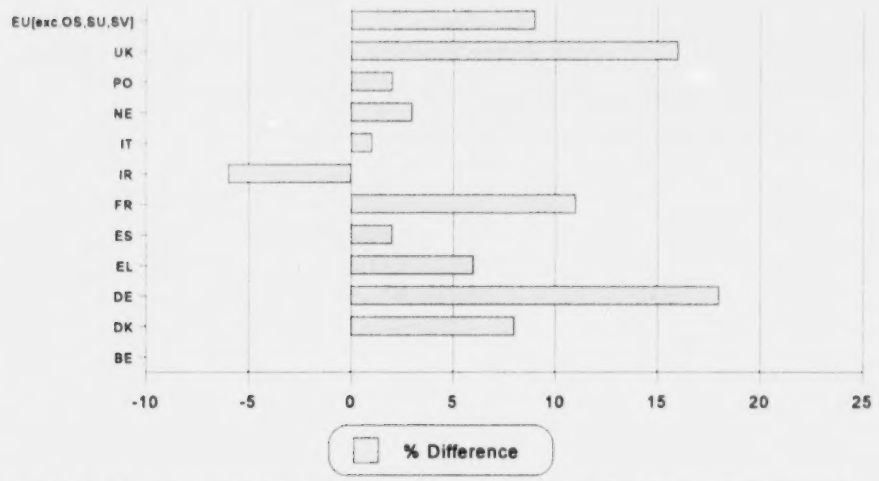
Volume of employment (Table 3)

There are many variables to take account of when comparing mothers' and fathers' employment between different countries, including overall employment rates, the balance between part-time and full-time employment and hours actually worked. This section on parental employment concludes by comparing mothers and fathers and different countries on a variable which takes all these other variables into account - **volume of employment**. This variable is arrived at by calculating the total number of hours normally worked per week by all mothers and fathers in each country, then dividing it by the total number of mothers and fathers whether employed or not. This produces a figure - referred to as the 'volume of employment' - which shows how the paid workload is distributed between mothers and fathers:

- The volume of employment for men with children (38 hours per week) is more than double that for women with children (16 hours), reflecting men's higher overall employment, low part-time employment and longer hours of full-time employment.
- Dutch mothers have by far the lowest volume of employment (9 hours) followed by mothers in Ireland (11 hours), Spain and the UK (just under 13 hours). These low volumes of employment for mothers owe most to low overall employment in Ireland and Spain, and to high part-time employment and low hours of part-time work in the Netherlands and UK.
- The highest volume of employment among mothers is in Portugal (28 hours) which heads Denmark (25 hours) because of high full-time employment rates.
- Portugal also shows the highest volume of employment for fathers, equal at just under 43 hours per week of employment per father with Greece, reflecting high levels of employment and long hours worked by full-time workers. Denmark has the lowest volume of employment for fathers at 36 hour.
- The highest volume of parental employment (ie. taking account of both fathers are mothers) is Portugal, followed by Denmark; the lowest volume is in the Netherlands, followed by Ireland and Spain.

Figure 2

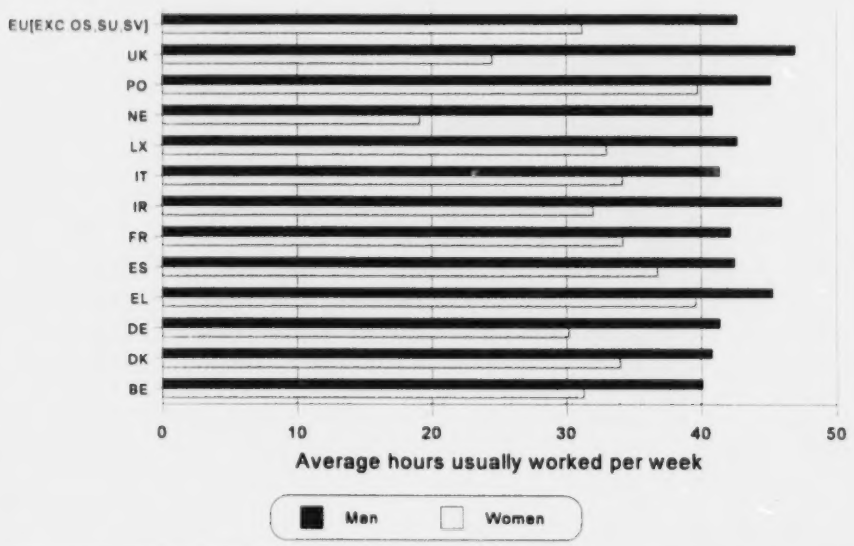
Difference between employment for women with a youngest child aged 0-3 and 3-10: 1993



NB: the difference is the % of women with a child aged 3-10 who are employed, less the % of women with a child aged 0-3 who are employed.

Figure 3

Hours usually worked per week by men and women with a child under 10:1993



Births, child population and lone parent families (Table 4)[5]

In 1993 there were 43.1 million children under 10 in the EU (including the new Member States); 21.4 million children were aged 0-5 years and 21.7 million were aged 5-10 years. Germany had the largest child population (8.9 millions), followed by UK and France (7.7 and 7.5 million respectively), Italy (5.6 million) and Spain (4.2 million). Austria, Denmark, Finland, Ireland, Luxembourg each had under a million children aged 0-10 years.

Throughout the EU, children under 10 account for just under 12% of total population. The highest proportions are in Ireland (16%), France and the UK (13%). The lowest proportions are in Spain, Germany and Greece (11%), with Italy lowest of all (10%).

The fertility rate throughout the European Union (excluding Austria, Finland and Sweden) stands at an historically low 1.46 (1993), a figure well below the level (2.1) needed to replace the population.The highest levels of fertility are in Sweden and Ireland; the lowest levels, below 1.4, are in Greece, Italy, Spain and Germany (Figure 4a); although the fertility rate in former West Germany was low, 1.39, the level in the former East Germany was substantially lower, at only 0.8.

In the last 30 years, the fertility rate has fallen 45% (from 2.67). Since 1985, it has fallen 8%, but with considerable variations between Member States. The three Scandinavian countries and Luxembourg have shown an increase in fertility of 10% or more (highest in Denmark, +21%), while the four Southern European countries and Ireland have shown a decrease of 10% or more (highest in Ireland and Spain, -23%). In Germany, there has been a small increase in the West (+9%, from 1.28 to 1.39), but a very large fall in the East (-54%, from 1.73 to 0.8)

Women in the EU are having their **first child** at ever later ages - at an average age of 27 or more in Netherlands, France and the UK, and over 26 in most other Member States (there is no information on when men have their first child). Including **all births**, the average age of childbearing across the EU is now nearly 29. Although there are no statistics on men's age when children are born to them, it seems likely that they will be, on average, at least as old as women, if not older - and that they are following the same trend of later parenthood.

At the same time as men and women are increasingly over 25 when they have children, the 25-49 year age group make up an increasing proportion of the labour force - as maternal employment rises, paternal employment remains high and employment falls off among younger and older age groups. Both the economic and reproductive workload is therefore increasingly carried by this age group. The use and distribution of time - between women and men, between the employed and unemployed, over the life-course and between employment, caring and other activities - is

[5]The information for this part comes from Eurostat (1995) *Demographic Statistics 1995* and European Commission (DGV) (1995) *The demographic situation in the European Union,* both published by the Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg.

becoming a critically important issue throughout the EU.

Another important trend has been the increase in the number of births outside marriage or cohabitation, and in the number of separations and divorces. One consequence has been more lone parent (mostly lone mother) families. Although the proportions are growing in all Member States, this type of family is more common in some countries than others. The highest levels are found in Denmark, Austria, Sweden and the UK, followed by Germany and France, while the lowest levels are in Southern Europe (Greece, Italy and Spain) (Figure 4b).

The employment rate of lone mothers is: substantially lower than that for married or cohabiting mothers in Denmark, Ireland, Sweden, UK; similar in Belgium, Germany, Netherlands, Portugal, Finland; and higher in France, Greece, Spain, Italy, Luxembourg and Austria.

Figure 4a

Total Fertility Rate: 1993

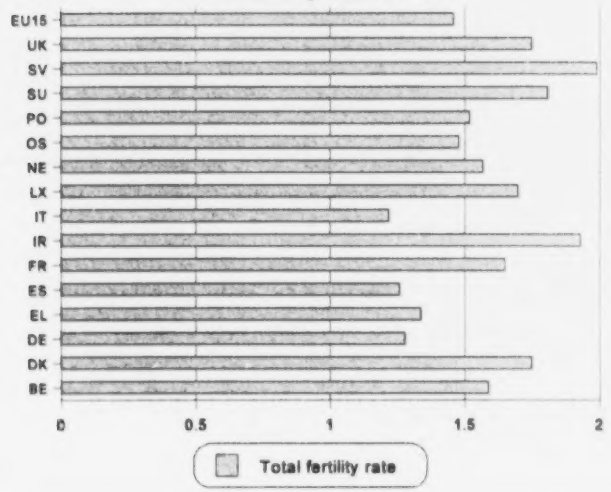
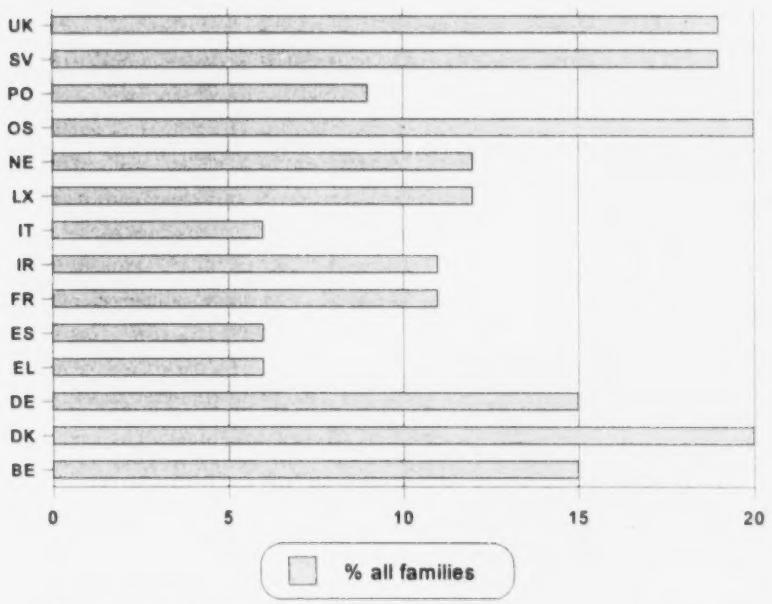


Figure 4b

Lone Parent Families as % of all Families: 1990 - 91



NB: OS = 1993; SV = 1992-93

Statutory leave arrangements for workers with children (Table 5)[6]

All countries make some provision for women to take leave at the time of the birth of their child; this is usually a period of leave specifically for women (ie. a **Maternity Leave**), but in the case of Sweden, the leave is part of the Parental Leave entitlement (of which 30 days can only be taken by the mother and 30 days only by the father). The length of post-natal Maternity Leave varies between countries and in some cases varies between women in the same country when there is a part of the leave period that women can choose to take before or after birth; in most cases, the period of post-natal leave is between 8-14 weeks. The main exception is the UK, where women who meet certain eligibility criteria can take up to 29 weeks of leave after birth; the UK however is also unusual in that most of the Maternity Leave period is unpaid and most of the paid period is only paid at a low flat rate rather than a high income-related rate. In most other countries, women on Maternity Leave receive 70-100% of normal earnings throughout the period of their leave (Figure 5).

Only the three Scandinavian Member States provide a right to a period of **Paternity Leave** of 2 weeks or more. Four other countries offer fathers leave at the time of their child's birth, but only for 2-3 days (Figure 5).

Most Member States offer a statutory right to some form of **Parental Leave,** or in the case of Belgium a universal system of 6-12 month 'career breaks' per worker subject to employer agreement available for any reason including care of young children. However, Ireland, Luxembourg and the UK offer nothing (Figure 5).

Parental Leave schemes vary considerably, for example:

- in length (from 6 months in Greece to 3 years in France, Finland, Germany, Spain and Sweden);
- when leave can be taken (in Denmark and Sweden it can be used until after children start school, whilst elsewhere it has to be used immediately after Maternity Leave and before children are 3 years old);
- other parameters of flexibility (with the Swedish scheme by far the most flexible, offering parents the choice of taking leave in one block of time or several, and on a full-time or various part-time bases);
- whether and how parents on leave are paid (only the three Scandinavian countries offer a substantial payment to all parents on leave; other countries provide low payments to some parents or for part of the leave period; often no payment is made at all);
- whether the Leave is treated as a family entitlement (as in most countries, with parents deciding between themselves how to divide the leave) or as an individual right (as in

[6]This section refers only to statutory entitlements to take leave; see Note at the end of Table 5 concerning leave entitlements arising from collective agreements. For further information on leave arrangments, see EC Childcare Network (1994) *Leave Arrangements for Workers with Children,* Brussels, European Commission Equal Opportunities Unit; and OECD (1995) *Employment Outlook 1995*, Paris, OECD

Greece and the Netherlands, where each parent has a non-transferable entitlement). In Denmark, part of the leave is a family right, but a more recent addition is an individual non-transferable entitlement; in Sweden, while Parental Leave is a family entitlement, 30 days of the total 15 months may only be taken by the mother and 30 days only by the father.

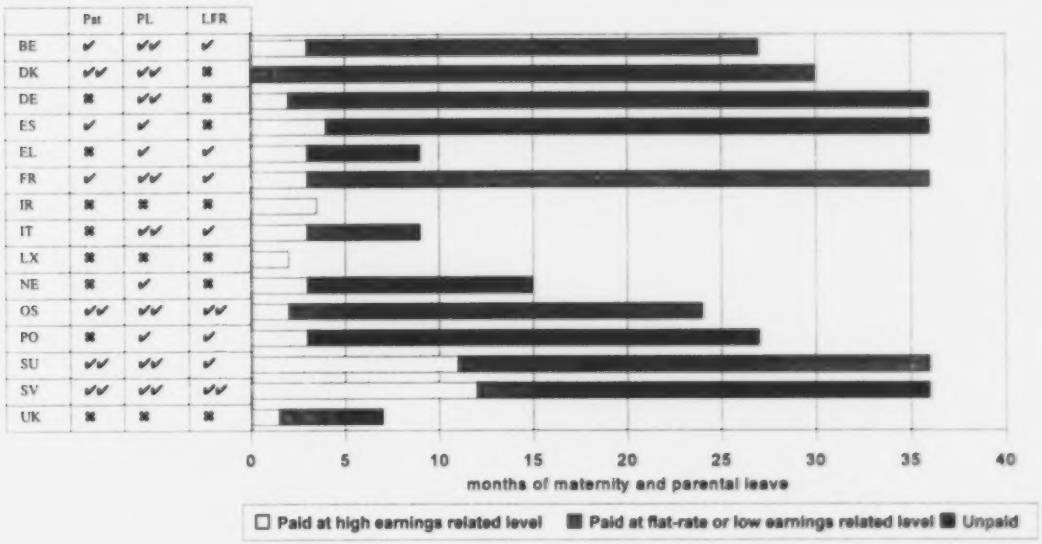
Both Finland and Sweden give parents the right to work reduced hours after the end of Parental Leave and until children reach 8 years, the end of the first year in compulsory schooling.

Finally, 8 Member States offer some form of **Leave for Family Reasons,** giving parents the right to take time off work when children are ill. Again there are considerable variations in the time permitted and whether payment is made; the most generous entitlements are in Germany and Sweden (Figure 5).

Figure 5

Statutory Leave for workers with children

	Pat	PL	LFR
BE	✔	✔✔	✔
DK	✔✔	✔✔	✖
DE	✖	✔✔	✖
ES	✔	✔	✖
EL	✖	✔	✔
FR	✔	✔✔	✔
IR	✖	✖	✖
IT	✖	✔✔	✔
LX	✖	✖	✖
NE	✖	✔	✖
OS	✔✔	✔✔	✔✔
PO	✖	✔	✔
SU	✔✔	✔✔	✔
SV	✔✔	✔✔	✔✔
UK	✖	✖	✖



✖ = *no leave entitlement*
✔ = *unpaid leave entitlement*
✔✔ = *leave entitlement with some payment to some or all families*

Pat: Paternity leave
PL: Parental leave
LFR: Leave for Family Reasons

SECTION 3 - NATIONAL PROFILES

BELGIUM

The system

Belgium is a federal state. The Flemish, French and German Communities each have responsibility for services for young children.

Compulsory schooling starts at the age of 6 years. There are two systems of **publicly-funded services for children under 6 years** - welfare and education. These systems overlap for children aged 30-36 months.

Within the **welfare system**, services are the responsibility at Community level of a Government Department in the German-speaking Community - *Dienst für Kind und Families (DKF)*; and of two public agencies in the French and Flemish Communities - *Office de la Naissance et de l'Enfance (ONE)* and *Kind en Gezin (K&G)*. *ONE* and *K&G* are accountable to and funded by, respectively, the French Community Ministry of Culture and Social Affairs and the Flemish Community Ministry of Culture, Family and Welfare.

Within the welfare system, which mainly provides for children under 36 months, there are several types of centre [see glossary - (a)(b)(c)] and organised family day care [see glossary - (d)]. These services are available on a full-day, all year basis[7]. Publicly-funded services within the welfare system may be managed by local authorities or private organisations; in the French Community, the balance is 60/40.

Within the **education system**, pre-primary schooling is provided for children from 2½ years until compulsory school age. The service is the responsibility of Education Ministries at the Community level. It is available during term-time and for the same hours as primary school [see glossary - (e)].

Primary school hours are from 08.30 to 15.30, with schools closed on Wednesday afternoon. Supervision during the lunch break is usually provided, and lunch is provided in some schools.

Publicly-funded services providing care and recreation for school-age children are provided in centres. In the French Community, these centres are usually school-based [see glossary - (f)] and may be managed by local authorities or, in the case of services in private subsidised schools, by the governing body for the school and independent of schools. In the Flemish Community, a large number of centres are independent of schools and are managed by local authorities [see

[7]'Full-day, all year basis' means at least 8 hours a day and throughout the year with the possible exception of closure during a short period in the summer.

glossary - (g)]. In the Flemish Community, provision can also be made for school children in organised family day care within the welfare system. In both Communities, there are schemes to provide care and recreation for children during the school holidays, particularly in the summer [see glossary - (h)]; these are usually organised by local authorities.

Private non-subsidised services are provided in centres and by family day carers [see glossary - (i) (j)]. These services are indirectly subsidised through tax relief for parents' costs (see **Costs and Funding** box).

Objectives and key concepts

In the French community, services in the **welfare system** have long-established aims of social prevention and providing care for the children of employed parents. A law adopted in 1993 confirms these roles but adds others, in particular to *"foster the child's physical, psychological and social development in an appropriate environment and in accordance with pedagogical principles adapted to the age of the child"*. The law also says that access to good quality services is the right of every child and that services must respect cultural diversity and pay attention to the needs of handicapped children.

Services in the welfare system in the Flemish Community also have a long-established objective of social protection for disadvantaged children, but in the 1980s they have increasingly assumed a role in employment policy. So in a decree adopted at the end of 1983, the Flemish Community Government defined the following priorities for publicly-funded services: children with employed parents, children who need care outside the family for social or pedagogical reasons and parents with a low income.

The main aims of the services in the **education system** for children under compulsory school age are: to help the child develop as a person; to socialise the child; to foster the child's cognitive, emotional, psycho-motor and language development; and to prepare children for primary school. In the French Community, schools are free to organise their own programmes, but may adopt the official programme based on *l'acceuil et l'écoute de l'enfant*, allowing children to develop at their own pace in a warm and cooperative atmosphere. There is no official programme for the Flemish Community.

Main developments since 1990

French Community

1. Two new laws have been adopted by the French Community: the first (29/3/93) regulates publicly-funded centres in the welfare system; the second (23/9/94) specifies the conditions that private centres and family day carers must meet. As well as regulating the organisation of services, the first law provides for improved funding to support children *"suffering serious psychological, medical or social problems"*. It also introduces the need to ensure the continuing training of workers, but only in publicly-funded services; however, so far there have been no guidelines or regulations to define what this training means. The second law introduces the possibility for staff from *ONE* to pay attention to the level and type of training of workers in

private services when they inspect these services.

2. An initiative begun in Brussels to organise a network of *crèches* for children whose parents are unemployed or training has been extended to the Walloon Region where some decentralised projects are being set up.

3. The Minister in the French Community with responsibility for child welfare published a plan for a coordinated children's policy in 1994 - *The right to be a child for all children.* The plan is based on a consultation begun in 1990, and is very much in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. One of the first achievements of the plan has been the establishment of a Child Care Observatory, providing a source of information and support in decision-making for the French administration of the Brussels Region.

Flemish Community

4. There has been considerable debate about services for school-age children and some progress in their development. A report was made in July 1992 to the Minister of Family and Welfare by a Round Table Conference; while in the same year, the Community Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs began to support a programme for long-term unemployed women, to train them for work in services for school-age children. In 1994, the Flemish Government published a policy document on services for school-age children, which allocates coordination for these services to the Minister of Family and Welfare and makes *K&G* responsible for monitoring these services. Finally, a Commission on Quality in School-age Childcare (*Kwaliteitscommissie voor Buitenschoolse Opvang)* was established with the task of defining quality criteria; it presented its report in May 1995.

A pioneering role in the development of services for school-age children has been played by the Province of Limburg, which established a Provincial Commission for School-age Childcare in 1991 to develop services; and by the Resource and Training Centre for Childcare (*Vormingscentrum voor de Begeleiding van het Jonge Kind)*, which has developed training, including programmes for unemployed women with low educational qualifications

5. In 1992, the Flemish Government decided to increase publicly-funded provision in the welfare system by 1,500 places, but made no extra resources available. This led to pressure to increase staff workloads and parents' fees. For this and other reasons, the share of costs paid by parents has increased. At the same time, however, public funding from *K&G* increased by 92% between 1988 and 1994. *K&G* has also continued to develop its support and monitoring role, shifting away from a focus on health and hygiene towards a more pedagogical perspective, culminating in the development of new assessment scales for use in monitoring quality.

6. Following a report in 1992, the Women's Working Group of the Flemish Parliament published another report in 1994 on services for young children in the welfare system. This report, based on a major hearing, emphasised the need for an integrated policy with different types of services under the same political control, the importance of monitoring quality and

appropriate training for staff.

Federal level

7. A collective agreement was reached between employers and trades unions for 1993-1994 and 1995-96 to allocate a sum equivalent to 0.05% of the private sector wages bill to establish a fund for promoting services for young children. Originally limited to services providing care and recreation for school-age children (ie. between 2.5 and 12 years), since 1995 the money can be allocated to services for children from 0-3 years. Priority is to be given to children with parents who are employees (rather than self-employed). In 1994, BF 896,000,000 was raised nationally for the fund and projects for an amount of BF 575,000,000 were submitted (BF 164 millions in the Flemish Community, BF 410 millions in the French Community). The fund is not permanent and will need to be re-negotiated every 2 years.

Assessment of the current situation

French Community (by Perrine Humblet)

In 1992, *ONE* funded a survey in the French Community on the accessibility of publicly-funded services in the welfare system. The survey showed that as a result of the shortage of places parents had to apply on average 12 weeks into pregnancy if they were to stand a chance of gaining a place for their child by the end of Maternity Leave. Centres were used overwhelmingly by employed parents - 92% of children had two employed parents - and were hardly ever used by the children of unemployed parents. The shortage of places was unevenly distributed geographically; for example, the provinces of Hainaut, Liège and Namur have 80-100 publicly-funded places per 1,000 children under 3 in welfare system services, compared to 149 in Anvers and 185 in Brabant. The degree of choice between *crèches* and *services de gardiennes encadrées* is also uneven; generally, *crèches* are more numerous in urban areas as well as being more likely to cater for the children of low income households.

A quarter of the workers in *crèches* had only precarious statutory employment rights and half were employed part-time. But there had been staff changes in only 20% of *crèches* in the previous year; by contrast, most *services de gardiennes encadrées* (85%) had staff changes in this period, with 10% of *gardiennes encadrées* leaving their job.

There are concerns about quality as well as the shortage of places. A few fairly simple indicators used in the survey suggested great discrepancies between services and generally speaking the issue of quality is still not the subject of public debate in the French Community. However, in 1995 some University researchers will be invited to consider different ways of improving quality. The problem needs to be addressed urgently; it is high time that measures were taken to support the management of publicly-funded services so as to improve what appears to be the very uneven quality of services.

Flemish Community (by Fred Deven)

There are a number of positive features about the current situation and recent developments. The supply of services has increased, while at the same time more attention is paid to quality and the

average quality of services has improved with a shift away from a few centres of excellence to a broader basis of good quality provision. Especially for services for school-age children, attempts are being made to develop a more coherent and integrated policy, particularly important given the number of agencies involved. There is also growing social and political interest from a number of sources including: Parliament; the Family League, a powerful lobby which has shown an increasing commitment to the cause of better provision; and at the federal level, social partners who have agreed to provide additional funds for new services.

To set against this, there is still unmet demand and a continued split between services in the welfare and education systems, as well as those services for young children which come under other administrations (for example, playgrounds which provide for 175,000 children during the summer holidays and are the responsibility of the Ministry of Culture).

Allocating responsibility for regulating services to one government agency carries the risk of developing a uniform approach which might inhibit innovative and experimental developments. The regulatory system continues to have some inconsistencies, for example family day carers in organised schemes may take 4 children, while private family day carers are allowed to have 5.

Overall, services providing care and recreation for school-age children suffer at present from inadequate regulation. The importance of regional coordinators - who in the past have supported the development of services, for example acting as facilitators, transmitters of experience and promoters of training - is underestimated, both at local and Community levels. No reference is made to the formal appointment of these workers in draft regulations for services providing care and recreation for school-age children.

Finally, as in many other parts of Europe, there are very few men (less than 3%) working in Flemish services for young children.

Glossary

Services

a. Crèche (French) / kinderdagverblijf (Flemish): centre for children aged 0-36 months, open on a full-day, all year basis. From 18-48 places.

b. Prégardiennat / peutertuin: same as **crèche**, except takes children aged 18-36 months.

c. Maison communale d'accueil de l'enfance (MCAE) (French only): centre for children aged 0-72 months, but only publicly funded for 12 places for children aged 0-36 months. Open on a full-day, all year basis. From 12-24 places.

d. Services de gardiennes encadrées / dienst voor opvanggezinnen: organised family day care of at least 10 family day carers (German and French speaking Communities) and 15 (Flemish). Supervised by 1 worker for every 20 family day carers (German and French Communities) or 30 family day carers (Flemish). For children aged 0-6 years, but only publicly funded for children aged 0-3 years in the French Community.

e. Ecole maternelle / kleuterschool: pre-primary schooling for children aged 2½ - 6 years, open during term-time from 8.30 to 15.30, but usually closed on Wednesday afternoons. Mostly situated in primary schools.

f. Garderie scolaire / buitenschoolse opvang: school-based service providing care and recreation for children aged 3-10 years (or older) available outside school hours, usually before school, at lunch time and after school, on Wednesday afternoons and sometimes during school holidays.

g.Initiatief voor buitenschoolse opvang (Flemish only): centre providing care and recreation for school-age children, separate from school, and available outside school hours and in school holidays.

h. Plaines de jeux, plaines de vacances / speelpleinwerking: service providing care and recreation for children aged 3-10 (or older) during the school holidays.

i. Maison d'enfants (French only): private centre for children aged 0 - 7 years. From 9-24 places.

j. Gardienne indépendante / particulier opvanggezin, 'zelfstandige onthaalmoeder : self-employed family day carer for children from 0-7 years.

Workers in services

Puéricultrice / kinderverzorgster: works in *crèche/kinderdagverblijf, prégardiennat/peutertuin, MCAE.* Two year, post-16 training.

Infirmière / verpleegster: works in *crèche/kinderdagverblijf, prégardiennat/peutertuin, MCAE, service de gardiennes encadrées/dienst voor opvanggezinnen.* Three year, post-18 training in nursing. **Infirmière sociale / sociaal verpleegster** has an additional 1 year training in social work.

Assistante sociale / maatschappelijk assistente: works in *crèche/kinderdagverblijf, prégardiennat/ peutertuin, MCAE, service de gardiennes encadrées/dienst voor opvanggezinnen.* Three year, post-18 training in social work.

Institutrice pré-scolaire / kleuterleidster: works in *école maternelle / kleuterschool.* Three year, post-18 training in education.

Gardienne / opvanggezin: family day carer either in organised scheme (*gardienne encadrée / dienst voor opvanggezin*) or self-employed (*gardienne indépendante / particulier opvanggezin).* No basic training required; since 1993 *gardiennes encadrées* must receive continuous training; and since 1994 *gardiennes indépendantes* must have some relevant experience or receive some training before they can be approved by *ONE.*

Staffing standards and the regulation of private non-subsidised services

Staff:child ratios in publicly-funded centres within the welfare system are 1 *puéricultrice* for 7 places under 3 years, plus 1 *infirmière* and .5 of an *assistante sociale* or of an *infirmière sociale* for every 48 children. Heads of centres must be an *infirmière sociale* or an *assistante sociale*. In organised family day care there should be no more than 3 children per family day carer in the French Community and 4 children per family day carer in the Flemish Community.

Staff:child ratios in pre-primary schooling are 1 *institutrice* for 19 children, 1.5 for 20-25 children, 2 for 26-38 children.

There are no standards applying to publicly-funded services providing care and recreation for school-age children.

Private non-subsidised centres must be approved by public authorities. The regulation of services is the responsibility of *ONE* and *K&G*. In the French Community, recent legislation lays down staffing standards in private non-subsidised centres for children from 0-7 years as: 2 adults for 9 children; 3 for 15; and 4 for 21 (but training levels are not specified). A private family day carer should have no more than 3 children, including her own. In the Flemish Community, a family day carer who is approved by *K&G* may take up to 4 children, but a private family day carer who has not been approved may take up to 5 children.

Costs and funding

The two systems of publicly-funded services are funded differently. In the welfare system, public funding comes from a number of sources, the most important being *ONE* (which contributed, on average, 48% in 1987) and *K&G* (which in 1994 contributed 56% of total costs); other sources include local authorities, private non-profit organisations, regional governments and national funds for family allowances and employment promotion. Parents contribute to costs, on the basis of formulas produced by Community Governments which take account of family income and numbers of children. In 1987, parents' contributions covered, on average, 17% of the total costs of services for children under 3 years in the French Community; the figure for 1994 in the Flemish Community was 30%.

In the education system, pre-primary schooling is funded by the Education Ministries of the respective Community Governments. Parents make no payments.

Funding of school-based services providing care and recreation for school-age children comes from the governing bodies of schools (local authorities in the case of publicly managed schools) and parents. There are no cost studies for this service, showing how the costs are allocated between these governing bodies and parents. A study in the Brussels Region found that the average parental contribution was BF 600 a month for a child using a *garderie* for 4 days a week. In the Flemish Community, services in centres separate from schools receive funding from the Community Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs and from local authorities.

Services in the welfare system for children from 0-12 years can also receive financial support from funds established as the result of a collective agreement between employers and trades unions (see **Main developments since 1990**, point 7).

Tax relief is available for children under 3 years to subsidise parents' payments for publicly-funded services or for private services that are approved by *ONE* or *K&G*.

Levels of provision and how children are cared for while parents are at work

Levels of provision

Publicly-funded services for children aged 0-3 years: in the French Community in 1993, there were 42,597 places (27% of the age group). More than half (23,211) were for 2 year olds in pre-primary schooling; the remainder were divided between centres (10,320) and organised family day care (9,066). Overall, the number of places in publicly-funded services increased by 19% between 1988-93 - by 10% and 17% respectively in schools and centres, but by 56% in organised family day care.

In the Flemish Community in 1993, there were 70,277 places. More than half (39,650) were for 2 year olds in pre-primary schooling (*kleuterschool).* The remainder were in the welfare system; unlike the French Community, more places in these services were in organised family day care (19,134) than in centres (11,493). The number of places in welfare system services increased by 53% between 1988-93 - by 23% in centres and 78% in organised family day care.

In the German-speaking Community in 1993, there were 375 places, all in organised family day care (13% of the age group).

Overall in Belgium in 1993, there were places for 30% of the age group.

Publicly-funded services for children aged 3-compulsory school age (6 years): in the French Community in 1993, there were 140,761 children in this age group in pre-primary schooling, over 95% of the age group. The number of children in pre-primary schooling increased by 5% between 1988-1993. The Flemish Community has similar high levels of attendance at pre-primary schooling among this age group, approximately 97%.

Overall in Belgium in 1993, there were places for over 95% of the age group

Publicly-funded services providing care and recreation for school-age children: there is no data on the number of children or places in publicly-funded services providing for children below or over compulsory school age. However, it seems to be widespread in urban areas - for example in Brussels, 95% of pre-primary and primary schools provide *garderies* - and less common in rural areas.

Privately funded services: In the French Community *ONE* statistics are not precise, as the term *maison d'enfants* is used to cover a wide range of private services for children and not just *crèches*. The number of places provided in services included under this broad label grew from 2,335 in 1988 to 4,555 in 1993 (an increase of 95%). In the same period, the number of self-employed family day carers fell from 1,613 to 899 (a decrease of 44%). In the Flemish Community in 1993, the number of places at self-employed family day carers approved by *K&G* was 12,586.

How children are cared for while parents are at work

There is no information for the French Community. In the Flemish Community some information, but only for children under 3 years, is provided by information collected every 2 years by *K&G* via post-natal services (the information therefore is not from a randomly selected, representative sample). The 1993 data shows that 54% of parents used some type of non-parental care at least once a week; the main form of care was provided by grandparents (41%), followed by family day carers (29%), centres (13%) and other relatives (5%). There is no information on employer-funded services, but they are estimated to be minimal.

DENMARK

The system

Compulsory schooling starts at the age of 7 years. **Publicly-funded services for children under 7 years** are mainly provided within the **welfare system.** The Ministry of Social Affairs has responsibility at national level, with local authorities responsible at local level. As well as organised family day care [see glossary - (d)], there are several types of centre: for children under 3 years [see glossary - (a)], for children aged 3-6 years [see glossary - (b)(f)] and age-integrated centres [see glossary - (c)(e)]. These services are available on a full-day, all year basis.

The one service outside this integrated welfare-based system is provided within the **education system**. Nearly all 6 year olds attend pre-primary schooling which is available during term-time for a few hours a day [see glossary - (g)]. The services within the welfare system, outlined above, are also available to 6 year olds, and many use them in combination with *børnehaverklasser*.

School hours increase as children get older, from 15-22 hours a week (7 year olds) to 20-27 hours (10 years); hours may vary from day to day and place to place. The Ministry of Education has responsibility for the education system at national level; local authorities are responsible locally, providing schools.

Publicly-funded services providing care and education for school-age children are mainly provided in centres. Some children attend centres which are independent of school and operate within the welfare system; some of these centres also take younger children not attending school [see glossary - (c)(e)(h)]. But most children now use school-based centres mainly run by the education system [see glossary - (j)].

Social welfare departments in local authorities manage most services for children under 7 (excluding *børnehaverklasser* which are the responsibility of education departments). The remaining provision is managed by private organisations. Provision for children over 7 is managed by private organisations and local authorities, either social welfare or education departments.

Private, non-subsidised services are not common and consist mainly of family day care [see glossary - (k)]. There are no private, non-subsidised centres.

Objectives and key concepts

The principle underlying Danish services is that they are for all children. In practice, shortage of places means there are priorities for places, including children with employed parents and lone parents and children with special needs. The integration of children with disabilities into ordinary services is considered an important objective.

The Danish system is very decentralised - to local authorities and individual services. Each local authority defines the objectives and organisational conditions (eg. staffing) of the services for

which it is responsible. The content of the everyday life of centres is decided by the staff, parents and children in each centre. A circular from the national Ministry of Social Affairs does, however, put forward five broad principles on which the social and pedagogical objectives of services should be based:

- Children's development, well-being and self-reliance must be promoted; services must provide a secure and challenging everyday life, with an emphasis on close contact between children and adults and children developing on their own terms through free play and their own space. There should also be planned and shared activities, together with adults, in which children can become involved in creative and practical tasks, cultural activities and other shared experiences; these will support children's development and their ability to cooperate with other people.
- Children must be listened to: according to their age and maturity, children must be involved in planning and accomplishing activities.
- Parents must have influence: they must be given insight into the daily activities of their child's centre and opportunities to participate in many activities. They must be involved in decisions concerning the centre which are important for their children's experience, including defining objectives.
- Services are a resource in preventative work: on the basis of the close contact with children and their families, centres must be part of preventive work, which should include providing special support which some families need. Centres need to cooperate on an interdisciplinary basis with other services, including health care.
- Services must be part of their area's overall provision for children: centres should cooperate with public and private sector services for children in their local area, to ensure best use of total resources. It is also important that children become familiar with other activities in the local area.

Services for young children in the welfare system have different objectives to schools. Schools are much more structured and their rationale is learning; services in the welfare system place more emphasis on fellowship, enthusiasm and self-determination.

The reference in the Government circular to children being listened to in services reflects a growing emphasis in Denmark on the quality of life of children and their position as citizens in a democracy. Increasingly children are involved in making decisions which affect them and their daily lives, whether in families, services or society in general. This has affected work in services. Children are increasingly viewed as 'active persons', cultural and social human beings who should participate in all aspects of the everyday life of the centres they attend. Importance is attached to children's autonomy. In this perspective, staff are active members of the centre, rather than experts and leaders who are supposed to teach the children. In the everyday life of the centre, everybody - children and staff and parents - participates in decisions and activities.

Main developments since 1990

1. There has been continuing development of services over the period, especially services providing care and recreation for school-age children. Services for children below school age also

grew strongly in the early 1990s, but growth has been slower most recently; in particular, there has been almost no growth lately in services for the youngest children due to the high take-up for a new scheme of Parental Leave introduced in 1994. Around 80,000 parents took the new leave in 1994 and 53,000 in 1995; in both years, 10% of parents taking leave were fathers. Parents on leave are not allowed to use publicly-funded services for children under 3, except for the new open pedagogical services outlined below and may only use services on a part-time basis for children over 3 years. Local authorities can supplement the standard payment made to all parents on leave, by up to DKK 35,000 a year; in 1994, two thirds did so although the proportion has fallen to around a third in 1995. Local authorities may decide to make this payment because they want to encourage parents to take leave rather than use publicly-funded services for very young children.

2. Growth in services for children under school age has mostly occurred in *aldersintegrerede institutioner*. *Skolefritidsordninger* have increased rapidly, while provision in *fritidshjem* has declined, producing a strong movement towards school-based services providing care and recreation for school-age children.

New types of service have also developed, providing greater diversity. For example, in the last 5 years there has been rapid expansion of 'forest kindergartens', so that today there are 2-300; they have been established by enthusiastic staff and parents and reflect a growing interest in 'green' issues [see glossary - (f)]. Also, since 1990, 'pool-scheme centres' have developed; they are established by private groups, usually parents, who make an agreement with their local authority for funding support on a per capita basis; there are now about 150 of these schemes, mainly in rural areas [see glossary - (e)]. Most recently, local authorities have been given funds to establish new, open pedagogical services, for children aged 1-6 years with parents who are not employed, because they are on leave or unemployed, but who want opportunities for their children to be together with other children; by the end of 1995, about 20 local authorities had established these services

3. In 1993, the Prime Minister announced that all parents would be guaranteed a publicly-funded place for children aged 1-6 years by 1996 (the assumption being that children under 12 months would be cared for at home by parents using the new Parental Leave scheme introduced in 1994). Although only a recommendation to local authorities, not backed by legislation, the statement has been taken seriously by local authorities; the national government has provided some extra financial support for the additional staffing costs. Currently, two-thirds of local authorities offer some sort of guarantee of places and waiting lists have fallen from 35,000 in 1992 to 12,500 in 1995 but it is doubtful if all will be able to meet the 1996 target date; the shortfall is most common among local authorities around Copenhagen, which have many children. Growth in new places dropped from 20-30,000 a year in the early 1990s to 13,000 in 1995. Moreover expansion in some local authorities has been achieved at the cost of quality, with larger groups of children and lower staffing levels. A report published in 1995 estimates that 80,000 new places will be needed by the year 2000 to fully meet demand; three-quarters of these places will be needed to meet the growth in child population and the rest because of declining

use of Parental Leave and increased employment due to economic growth. Dk

4. Shortage of places has meant that in some local authorities unemployed parents have had difficulties accessing services for their children. Legislation passed in 1991 now makes it explicit that children should not lose their place in a service because a parent becomes unemployed. However, children with unemployed parents may still have lower priority for getting a place

5. There is a long tradition of close but informal cooperation between parents and staff. But now parents have gained real formal influence. Legislation introduced in 1992, and extended in 1994, requires centres and organised family day care schemes to have a management board with a parent majority. This board has wide responsibility, including determining pedagogical objectives and principles, budget (excluding salaries and rent) and appointments of new staff.

6. Training for *pædogoger* was extended to 3.5 years. Basic training now consists of a common course covering all types of service and all age groups of children. The training has proved very popular in the last 5 years; in 1994, 70% of applicants did not get on a course despite an increase in training places intended to ensure enough trained staff for the many new services opened. In some parts of the country, it is difficult to recruit trained staff.

7. There has been a debate about the need for more men working in services for young children to improve the quality of the services. Many colleges training *pædogoger* want more male students and a campaign was launched in 1995 to recruit more men. In the 1995 intake of new students at the 32 colleges which train *pædogoger*, a little over 20% were male.

Assessment of the current situation (by Jytte Juul Jensen)

Denmark has an extensive system of services for young children, based on sustained public support and a social commitment to the needs of children and parents. This sustained development has produced a high level of affordable, good quality services. This reflects the philosophy behind the Danish welfare system of taking care of the social needs of the individual; it is considered that individuals and markets, operating alone, are unable to secure welfare. The system is based on the universal welfare principle, so that the whole population has access to services.

For services for children, this means a social right for every child - if the parents choose - to have a place in a service. This right has recently been reinforced by a government commitment to provide access to services for all children aged 1-6 years. Today, waiting lists in Denmark are at the lowest level ever recorded. Even though the new leave scheme for parents has reduced demand, many new places are still needed mainly because of an increasing birth rate. So the supply is still not adequate and, furthermore, some services are too expensive for some parents and in some areas there is too little choice (for example, only *dagpleje* available for very young children). The opening hours of the centres also make it difficult for some parents with particular working hours (eg.early mornings, late afternoons, evenings, nights).

Guaranteeing places is of course not without problems. In recent years, we have seen reductions in staffing levels and larger groups of children in centres. This means a reduction in the quality of services. These cuts have been met by widespread action, sometimes even strikes by staff, strongly backed by parents.

One of the hottest issues is the space available to children inside centres. The space is too small, leading to sickness, especially among very young children, and unnecessary conflicts between children. The standards for space reflect old pedagogical practice based on classroom teaching, rather than current practice which emphasises play and creativity.

Today, services for young children are used by all social groups, by single parent and two parent families, by ethnic minority families, families with difficulties, unemployed parents and so on - although we can see that some local authorities do not give places to children of unemployed parents. Integration of children with disabilities into ordinary services is another important objective.

There is a considerable diversity of services, with new types of service continuing to evolve. The new types of service often reflect emerging political ideologies, for example 'forest kindergartens' are inspired by green issues and 'pool schemes' by privatization.

Alongside this diversity, there is a high degree of coherence across services for children below school age. For example, all services are the responsibility of one department, nationally and locally; all have a dual care and pedagogical function; services for children under and over 3 have similar opening hours; workers have the same (relatively high) level of training, pay and conditions; There is a common funding system, based mainly on public funding, but with parents making a contribution. There are close and good relations between parents and staff, and children play an active role in services, as equal members of a community.

With its well developed system of services for children, Denmark still has a great need for more research on all aspects of these services, and for a more developed system of further training for the staff.

Dk

Glossary

Services

a. Vuggestuer: centre for children aged 0-36 months, usually open on a full-day, all year basis.
b. Børnehaver: centre for children aged 3-6 years, usually open on a full-day, all year basis.
c. Aldersintegrerede institutioner: centre for children from 0-6 years or even older (ie.providing care and recreation for school-age children), usually open on a full-day, all year basis.
d. Kommunal dagpleje: organised family day care, mostly for children under 3 years but also for some aged 3-6 years. Supervised by 1 worker for about 70 children or 20 family day carers.
e. Puljeordninger: centre mainly for children aged 3-10 years, usually open on a full-day, all year basis. The main difference from other centres is that they are established by groups of individuals, usually parents, who make a funding agreement with the local authority.
f. Skovbørnehaver: same age group and hours as *børnehaver*. The main difference is that the children and workers spend the day in the countryside; they may have a small building, but spend most of their time outside. A variation is where one group in a *børnehaver* spends most of its time in the countryside or where groups take it in turn to spend their day in the countryside.
g. Børnehaveklasser: pre-primary schooling for 6 year olds and a few 5 year olds, in a class attached to a school, open during term-time for 3-4 hours a day. In the education system and intended to prepare children for starting school, but workers are *pædagoger* rather than teachers.
h. Fritidshjem: centre providing care and recreation for school-age children, separate from school, and available outside school hours and during school holidays. Some open before and after school hours, others only open in the afternoons.
j. Skolefritidsordninger: school-based service providing care and recreation for school-age children, available outside school hours and during school holidays.
k. Private dagpleje: private family day care.

Workers in services

Paedogog: works in all services except *kommunal dagpleje*. Three and a half year, post-18 training.
Pædagogmedhjælper: works in all services except *kommunal dagpleje* and some *skolefritidsordninger* which only employ *pædagoger*. No training required. Often young people gaining work experience before they start to train as a *pædagoger* or for some other occupation.
Dagplejer: family day carer, usually employed in *kommunal dagpleje*, but sometimes self-employed. No training required.

Staffing standards and the regulation of private non-subsidised services

There are no national standards on staffing for services in the welfare system. These are determined by local authorities. Staff:child ratios in centres are generally 1 adult for 3 children under 3 years; 1 adult for 6 children aged 3-6 years; 1 adult for 8 children aged 6-10. In organised family day care, there should be no more than 5 children per family day carer.

Nearly two-thirds of workers in centres for children aged 0-6 years are trained workers (*pædagoger)*.

Private non-subsidised services should be approved by public authorities, except for *dagplejer* taking 1 or 2 children.

Costs and funding

The integrated, welfare-based system of services has a common system of funding for publicly-funded services for children aged 0-6 years. Public funding comes from local authorities. Parents also contribute to costs. National regulations lay down that 30% of costs (excluding costs related to premises such as rent and maintenance) is the **maximum** that parents should have to pay. However, local authorities can reduce the proportion of costs that parents pay by providing additional public funding. Fees are also reduced for lower income families, for families with more than 1 child attending a service and for children with social or pedagogical needs. In 1994, parents' contributions covered, on average, 20% of the total costs of services for children under 3 years and 21% of the total costs of services for children aged 3-6 years.

Børnehaveklasser, in the education system, is funded by local authorities. Parents make no payments.

Publicly-funded services providing care and recreation for school-age children provided in the welfare system have the same system of funding and costs to parents as services for children under 6 years; in 1994, parents' contributions covered, on average, 27% of total costs. Services provided in the education system have a different system of funding and charging parents; there is no upper limit on the proportion of costs that parents can pay and no fee reductions for lower income families; there are however reductions where more than 1 child from a family attends and for children with social or pedagogical needs.

There is no national system of tax reduction or cash grants to parents to subsidise the costs of using services. However, local authorities can choose to give a cash grant to parents with a child under 3 attending a non-subsidised service while on the waiting list for a publicly-funded service. It can be given for 1 year only and is stopped when parents are offered a place in a publicly-funded service. This is a transitional measure, introduced in 1994 and lasting until the end of 1997, while local authorities develop their provision. The grant has not been used much; it is used by about 15% of local authorities, and in January 1995 only 195 parents were receiving the grant.

Levels of provision and how children are cared for while parents are at work

Levels of provision

Statistics are available showing the growth in attendance at publicly-funded services (except for *børnehaveklasser*) between 1989 and 1995. During this period, the number of children attending increased by 40% from 298,450 to 417,737. Attendance fell at *vuggestuer* and *fritidshjem*, increased modestly at *kommunal dagpleje* (2%) and *børnehaver* (18%) and increased rapidly at *aldersintegrerede institutioner* (78%) and *skolefritidsordninger* (283%). Of the 417,737 children attending in 1995, 25% went to *børnehaver*, 24% to *skolefritidsordninger*, 25% to *aldersintegrerede institutioner*, 16% to *kommunal dagpleje* and less than 10% each to *vuggestuer* and *fritidshjem*.

The number of children attending and the number of places available are very similar as most places are available and used on a full-time basis. About 8% of the places in *børnehaver* and *aldersintegrerede institutioner* are part-time, ie. available for less than 30 hours a week, while 20% of children at *kommunal dagpleje* attend less than 32 hours a week. Therefore, although the total number of places is likely to be lower than the number of children attending, the difference is not large.

Publicly-funded services for children aged 0-3 years: in 1995, there were 98,120 children attending services, 48% of the age group. Over half (58%) were in *kommunal dagpleje*, with the remainder divided equally between *vuggestuer* and *aldersintegrerede institutioner*

Publicly-funded services for children aged 3-compulsory school age (7 years): in 1995, there were 156,567 children aged 3-6 years attending services, 82% of the age group. Two-thirds (67%) were in *børnehaver* and a quarter (26%) in *aldersintegrerede institutioner*, but only 7% in *kommunal dagpleje*.

Nearly all 6 year olds attend *børnehaveklasser* in the education system, for 3-4 hours a day; about two-thirds of these children also attend publicly-funded care and recreation services.

Publicly-funded services providing care and recreation for school-age children: in 1995, 24% of 6-10 year olds attended services in the welfare system, mostly *fritidshjem* and *aldersintegrerede institutioner*, while 38% attended *skolefritidsordninger* in the education system, so that almost two-thirds of this age group attended a service providing care and recreation.

Privately funded services: there is no information

How children are cared for while parents are at work

A survey conducted in 1989 by BUPL (the trade union for *pædagoger)*, based on a representative national sample, looked at the main care arrangements for children under 7 years (ie.before compulsory school age). The survey covers all children, and not just those with employed parents. However, as 90% of fathers and 75% of mothers are employed, this overall picture gives a good indication of how children are cared for while parents are at work.

Nearly a quarter of children were wholly or mainly cared for by their parents - 5% by parents on leave, and 18% by parents not on leave (ie. because one or both parents were not employed or because both parents were employed but arranged their hours to provide continuous parental care). The most common form of care was publicly-funded centres (42%), followed by publicly-funded organised family day care (18%); altogether, therefore, 60% of all children used publicly-funded services. Private family day care was the most common private arrangement (8%), with relatives playing a small part (5% of all children).

There were some differences in care arrangements according to the age of the children. Children under 3 were more likely to be wholly or mainly cared for by a parent (29% v 17% of children aged 3-7 years) and more likely to be cared for by a private family day carer (12% v 4%) or a relative (8% v 3%). By contrast, they were less likely to be in a publicly-funded services (47% v 71%); if in a publicly-funded service, they were less likely to attend a centre (18% v 61%) and more likely to be in organised family day care (29% v 10%).

The survey therefore emphasises the major role of publicly-funded services in Denmark and the relatively minor role of private and informal arrangements.

GERMANY

De

The system

Germany has a federal constitution, with 16 states or *länder*. Broad legal frameworks and general guidelines on services for young children may be set at federal level. But the *länder* are responsible for developing and implementing specific legislation and policy on services for young children.

Compulsory schooling starts at the age of 6 years. **Publicly-funded services for children under 6 years** are usually provided in the **welfare system** and are usually the responsibility of the same department: the Ministry for Family, Youth, Women and Senior Citizens at Federal level, and Social Ministries in the *länder* (although in some cases, Education Ministries are responsible for services for children aged 3-6 years). Although there are common features between services for children under and over 3, there is not a fully integrated system; however, there are trends leading towards an integrated system (see **Main Developments since 1990**, point 1).

The types of services are very different between East and West. In the West, there is greater diversity, including some organised family day care. Some centres are for children under 3 years [see glossary - (a)], some for children aged 3-6 years [see glossary - (b)(c)]; there are also some examples of age-integrated centres [see glossary - (e)(f)(k)(l)]. Although some centres are available on a full-day, all year basis, the most common form of centre, *kindergarten*, is mainly available during term-time and for up to 6-7 hours a day (the traditional form has been open for 3-4 hours in the morning and 2 hours in the afternoon; but there is a trend towards longer hours in some cases, and towards shorter hours in other cases, with childrern attending either mornings or afternoons on a shift system).

In the East, the level of provision is higher, although there is less diversity. Provision consists mostly of *krippen* for children under 3 or *ganztagskindergarten* for children aged 3-6 years, both available on a full-day basis.

Publicly-funded services may be managed by local authorities or private organisations. The balance varies according to the type of centre; *krippen* are mainly managed by local authorities, while *kindergartens* are mostly managed by private but publicly-funded organisations.

School hours are mostly 4-5 hours in the morning, starting at 08.00, and can vary in length from day to day; generally, schools do not provide lunch facilities for children. Schools are the responsibility of Education Ministries in the *länder*

Publicly-funded services providing care and recreation for school-age children are mainly provided in centres, separate from schools, some of which are age-integrated [see glossary - (g)(k)(l)]. These centres are usually managed by local authorities. Some schools however do provide a service, but this is generally very limited in scope [see glossary - (h)(j)].

Private non-subsidised services are mainly provided by family day carers [see glossary - (d)(p)(q)]. There is a subsidy for low income families using family day carers and other private services approved by public authorities (see **Costs and Funding** box).

Objectives and key concepts

Krippen used to see their function as mainly providing physical care, but now they recognise that children under 3 also have social needs and abilities. The trend therefore is to develop a specific *'krippenpädagogik'*, concerned to encourage social interaction between children under 3 years. *Elterninitiativen* pay particular attention to the interests of parents; this applies both to organisational issues (for example, offering opening hours that cater to the needs of parents) and to their philosophy. Their aim is to break down the isolation experienced by many families and to give support to them by involving parents in the childcare process, creating opportunities to exchange experience of parenting and to reflect on that experience and providing help where it is needed.

The basic objectives of *kindergartens* have been to prepare children for school, compensate for social disadvantages and ensure all children start school with the same opportunities; but there is a shift towards focusing more on social development. Since the '68 student movement, the trend is to put less emphasis on cognitive skills and more on social skills. The *'situationsansatz'* is a widely accepted approach that stresses the importance of workers accompanying children in their everyday lives, developing ideas and programmes in response to situations that arise, and integrating children into the social environment. Children are encouraged to play freely within a broad programme framework, with the input from the workers determined by the interaction that goes on between the children; the aim is to avoid being 'school-like' and to provide a supportive social environment for children. Some *kindergartens* do have specific pedagogical concepts, for example *kindergartens* which integrate children with disabilities; for these children they stress the importance of integration and for the children without disabilities they stress the benefit of increased sensitivity and social skills.

Age-integrated centres place emphasis on the need to compensate for the effects of a very low birth rate, in particular the fact that many children in Germany grow up alone without any siblings.

Horte stress the importance of not being school based and not focusing on school achievement. Their orientation is towards 'youth work' rather than school and compensating for social disadvantage. Their main concerns are with social learning and integration. Their objective is to promote the whole personality of the child, and children's creative and social potential.

Main developments since 1990

1. The main development has been the reunification of Germany. This has meant bringing together two very different systems of services for young children, which in practice has meant the system in the East adapting to the pedagogical standards of the West German system. This has involved retraining programmes in Western pedagogics for East German workers. The

Eastern system was more centralised and structured, with very detailed curricula and cognitive objectives. In contrast, the Western system involves more individuality and self-direction for the children; the concept of free play is stressed, with children deciding what they want to play and in what activities they want to participate (see discussion of *'situationsansatz'* in section on **Objectives and Concepts**). This process has involved a reduction of status and pay of workers in *horte* in East Germany, who had the same status as school teachers before unification.

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The level of provision was much higher in the East than in the West - and it still is. Basically, in the East, provision still meets demand. While there has been a reduction in the number of places available since reunification, this has been matched by a reduction in demand due to a dramatic fall in the birth rate and a large increase in unemployment among women with small children, as well as the application to East Germany of the 3 year Parental Leave that has been developed in West Germany. The reduction in places has, however, led to fewer jobs in services for young children. Some centres in the East also have an insecure future because their premises are being reclaimed by former owners.

2. A new Federal Child and Youth Welfare Law *(Kinder- und Jugendhilfegesetz)* was passed in 1991. One of the objectives of the law is to create a coherent funding system for services for children from 0-6 years, so that the local authorities, *länder* and parents contribute to all services in the same way as they do at present to *kindergartens*. Another important objective is to increase participation by parents in publicly-funded services. At present participation is rather formal, with a 'parent-teachers' meeting twice a year, although the trend is to include parents more in decision-making on specific issues like opening hours, staffing, pedagogical principles and equipment. The law also emphasises the importance of parent initiatives. So far, *elterinitiativen* have been mainly funded by big city local authorities; the trend now is for the *länder* also to provide subsidies. Finally, the law calls for detailed planning of services, taking into account regional circumstances, and loosens regulation of private family day carers, for whom approval by local authorities is now only necessary if low income parents are to receive a public subsidy (see **Costs and Funding** box). Because of the federal structure of Germany, the detailed implementation of this broad legal framework depends on *länder* governments, which will lead to considerable diversity.

3. The new abortion law (passed in 1993 but currently contested in the courts) also had a major effect on provision of services for young children; it made provision for children aged 3-6 years in *kindergartens* a legal right. While universal provision has already been achieved in East Germany, this legal right has placed local authorities in West Germany under considerable pressure and has had the effect that other services, for children under 3 and providing care and recreation for school-age children, have been cut or not expanded. Another response has been to increase group size in existing *kindergartens* or to cut the provision of staff available to provide cover when workers are ill.

The law giving children the right to a *kindergarten* place will come into effect on January 1, 1996. For the first 3 years, it will be applied flexibly; children will be admitted to *kindergartens*,

in groups, at certain times of the year. From 1999, however, every child will have the right to be admitted on his or her third birthday.

4. There are new initiatives on staffing and training. In training, there is a movement to 'on the job' programmes that move away from school-like structures and introduce more adult-oriented pedagogics and more units that apply to everyday situations in centres. Also access to training for women is being widened, for instance distance learning, on the job part-time training, recognition of time spent bringing up children at home or as a family day carer etc. Some centres have started to mix qualified workers with experienced mothers; this is promoted to make services more 'family like' and to integrate the everyday experiences of the children, so that for instance going shopping and cooking with the children are included in the curriculum of centres, with such activities undertaken by these mixed teams. While none of these developments are, as yet, very widespread, they reflect a high level of innovation in services in Germany, also to be seen for instance in new types of services.

5. In West Germany, an increasing number of companies, though still in a minority, are participating in projects involving public-private partnerships to develop services for young children. This is most common in companies who wish to retain their highly qualified female staff.

Assessment of the current situation (by Monika Jaeckel)

The major strength of the Germany system, in my view, lies in its diversity. There is a wide variety of concepts and types of provision to choose from, to suit the individual needs and preferences of parents and children. Another positive aspect is the increasing support for opening up centres to their local communities and neighbourhoods and in this way to support the re-integration of childhood into public life. The other side of diversity is regional and local inequalities.

The major weakness is that public acceptance of services for school-age children and children under 3 years in West Germany is still low. The general preference is that small children should be in the care of their mothers while school children should return after school to a home in which the mother is present. This attitude stigmatises services that provide for these children, which have an image of only providing for 'problem families'. In this respect, there remains a big difference between East and West; the use of services for children under 3 is viewed much more favourably in the East. However, even in the West, employment continues to increase amongst women with very young children and attitudes about child care are changing.

In West Germany, there is very low provision of services for school-age children, which puts great pressure on working parents as the German school system operates on a half day basis. For this reason, many women with school-age children only work part-time, and even then it is often difficult for them to cope since the daily school schedule is irregular; sometimes school ends at 11.30, sometimes at 12.30 or 13.15. This means that, in practice, more young school-age children are left alone at home or in the care of a sibling than many would consider desirable. In East

Germany, however, the situation is different because there is much higher provision of services for school-age children.

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The shortage of publicly-funded services in West Germany means that many parents have to use expensive services. It is not unusual for women with higher qualifications (who have the least chance to get a place in publicly-funded services) to have to pay so much for the care of their young children that their labour market participation during these years hardly pays off, at least in terms of net income.

In East Germany, it will be important to maintain the developed service infrastructure on a long-term basis, as hopefully the current dramatic decline in birth rate is only a temporary phenomenon. A current problem is that the average age of staff in centres is increasing, since younger workers are the first to lose their jobs when staff cuts are made.

Generally the status of work in services for young children, and of the workers doing this work, is low, which has a bad effect on the self-confidence and motivation of these workers. The different levels of qualification held by workers often create hierarchical structures in centres that are unproductive, for example making it difficult to develop teamwork.

Glossary

Services

a. Krippe: centre for children aged 0-36 months, usually open from 07.00 to 16.30; most centres are closed for a short period in the summer but this varies a lot.

b. Kindergarten: publicly-funded centre for children aged 3-6 years. Traditionally in the West these centres have been open for 3-4 hours in the morning and 2 hours in the afternoon, but the trend is to extend opening hours in a variety of ways, for example running through to the early afternoon with lunch or providing longer hours in the afternoon.

c. Ganztagskindergarten: publicly-funded centre for children aged 3-6 years but open from 07.00 or 08.00 until 16.30 or 17.00, with lunch provided. This is the usual form of provision in East Germany where opening hours are often longer, sometimes from 06.00 to 18.00.

d. Privater kindergarten: same as *kindergarten* but without public funding (ie. they depend entirely on parent fees). They are very expensive and not common. Often work with a specific pedagogical concept like bilingual education.

e. Elterninitiative: parent-initiated and managed centre, often age-integrated taking children from 0-6 years; employ paid staff but parents also involved in daily activities such as cooking. Mainly in big cities. Opening hours according to parents' needs.

f. Erweiterte Altersmischung: *kindergartens* which take children younger than 3 years and up to 7 years, and integrate them with the other children to create mixed age groups.

g. Hort: centre providing care and recreation for school-age children, separate from school, and available outside school hours, from 07.00 until school begins and then after school to 16.30.

h. Betreute Grundschule: school-based service for children up to 10 years, available until 13.00, sometimes providing lunch.

j. Hausaufgabenbetreuung: 'homework group' for school-age children, usually involving up to 10 children supervised by an adult for 2 hours in the afternoon. Usually organised by private organisations.

k. Kinderhaus: age-integrated centre for children aged 0-6 years, and sometimes older (as old as 14 years in some cases). Within the centre children are grouped according to age; integration occurs through shared use of facilities and joint activities.

l. Familiengruppen: age-integrated centre for children aged 0-6 years, and sometimes older (as old as 14 years in some cases), but with mixed age groups.

m. Spielgruppen / Mutterkindgruppen: group for children under 3 years, meeting 2-3 times a week for 2-3 hours, with mothers present.

n. Kinderbetreuung im Mütterzentrum: mixed age group in 'mothers' centres (*mutterzentrum*), usually for children under compulsory school age. Children join the groups while their mothers participate in other activities in the 'mothers' centres'.

o. Kinderparkplatz: group that children can attend while parents do their shopping or other tasks, usually for children under 5 years. Children can attend on an hourly basis.

p. Tagesmutter: self-employed family day carer, mostly for children under compulsory school age.

q. Pflegenester: family day carer, taking group of 4-5 children under 5 years, not in her own home but in premises rented for the purpose or provided by the local authority.

Glossary (continued)

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Workers in services

Einrichtungs leiter/in: director of a *krippen, kindergarten* or other children's centre; can be trained as a *sozialpädagogin,* but can be *erzieherin.*
Sozialpädagog/in: works in *kindergarten,* but more common in *hort.* Three to four years post-19 training.
Erzieher/in: has traditionally worked in *kindergarten* and *hort;* now also working increasingly in services for children under 3 years. Three to five years post-16 training.
Kinderpfleger/in: works in services for children under 3 years and *kindergarten.* Three years, post-14 training and earns less than *erzieherin.* The trend is to phase out this training.
Säuglingsschwester: works in *krippen.* Trained as a paediatric nurse; can also work in hospital.
Tagesmutter: family day carer. No training required.

Staffing standards and the regulation of private non-subsidised services

There are no national standards on staffing for services in the welfare system. Standards are determined by each *länder* and consequently vary. In West Germany, staff:child ratios vary, for children under 3 years, from 1 adult to 5-7.5 children; and in *kindergartens* for children over 3 years, from 1 adult to 10-14 children; in East Germany, the ratio for children over 3 can be 1 adult for up to 18 children. Usually there are at least 2 staff per group, one being qualified (*erzieherin* or *sozialpädagogin),* the second person being untrained or a trainee.

In services for children outside school hours, the ratio is 2 adults for a group varying in size from 18-28 children, depending on the *länder*. Normally, one of the adults is qualified (*erzieherin* or *sozialpädagogin*), while the other is untrained or gaining experience whilst training.

Private non-subsidised services - family day care or centres - do not need to be approved by public authorities; but low income parents will only receive a subsidy for their fees if they use a family day carer approved by the local authority.

Costs and funding

Public funding of *kindergartens* comes from *länder* governments and local authorities; while for services for children under 3 years and providing for children outside school hours, public funding comes either from *länder* governments or local authorities (except for 3 *länder*, where funding is shared between *länder* governments and local authorities). Parents contribute to costs of all publicly-funded services, including *kindergartens*, taking account of family income and numbers of children. The relative contribution to costs of different public sources and parents varies between, and also within, *länder*, but parents on average pay between 16-20% of costs.

There is a subsidy for low income parents using private family day care services approved by local authorities or publicly-funded centres. The subsidy is means-tested, provided by local authorities and paid directly to the family day carer or the centre.

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Levels of provision and how children are cared for while parents are at work

Level of provision

Statistics for West Germany are only available for 1986 and 1990; for East Germany they are available for 1989, 1990 and 1991.

Publicly-funded services for children aged 0-3 years: in 1990, there were 38,153 publicly-funded *krippen* places in the former West Germany (2% of the age group); in the former East Germany there were 349,506 places (just over 50%). The number of places increased by 35% in West Germany between 1986 and 1990, but from a low base. Places in East Germany fell by 1% between 1989 and 1990 and by 27% between 1990 and 1991 - a loss altogether of 98,000 places.

Publicly-funded services for children aged 3-compulsory school age (6 years): in 1990, there were 1,552,027 publicly-funded places in West Germany (78% of the age group); in East Germany there were 860,855 places (100% of the age group). The number of places increased by 8% in West Germany between 1986 and 1990. Places in East Germany fell by 3% between 1989 and 1990 and by 17% between 1990 and 1991 - a loss of 185,000 places.

These statistics on *kindergartens* do not distinguish between services with different opening times, which can vary from a few hours in the morning only to a full day of 9 to 10 hours. *Ganztagskindergartens*, open on a full-day basis, are the main form of provision in East Germany, but account for only 13-15% of places in West Germany.

Publicly-funded services providing care and recreation for school-age children: in 1990, there were 128,789 publicly-funded *hort* places in West Germany, covering about 5% of children aged 6-10 years. In East Germany there were 677,417, covering about 85% of the 6-10 year age group. The number of places increased by 25% in West Germany between 1986 and 1990. Places in East Germany fell by 17% between 1989 and 1990 - a loss of 141,400 places.

Private services: most private provision is in family day care, although this type of provision is virtually non-existent in East Germany. Between 1986 and 1990, the number of places at family day carers approved by local authorities grew from 25,735 to 43,615, an increase of 70%. It is estimated that for every family day carer approved by local authorities, there is another family day carer who is not approved; and that 40% of places are for children under 3 years, 30% for children from 3 years to compulsory school age and 30% for school-age children.

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How children are cared for while parents are at work

The data given here are from a survey undertaken by Deutsches Jugendinstiut of a representative sample of married couples with at least one child under 6 years and both parents employed; the data was collected in 1991 for West Germany and 1992 for East Germany. They provide information for care arrangements when **mothers** are at work, but do not distinguish between mothers employed full-time and part-time; it should be noted that employed mothers in East Germany would have been more likely to have had full-time jobs (see Table 1).

For children under 3 years, the most common arrangement in West Germany was the child's father (40%) and a relative (nearly always grandparents) (40%). Care by other individuals (mostly paid care by family day carers) accounted for 13% of children and a centre for 7%. In East Germany the pattern was quite different. The most common arrangement by far was a centre (58%), followed by fathers (23%). Relatives accounted for only 17% of children and other individuals just 1%.

For children aged 3-6 years, the most common arrangement in West Germany was *kindergarten* or some other centre, followed by relatives (again mainly grandparents)(25%) and fathers (20%). Individual carers accounted for only 7%. In East Germany, 80% of 3- 6 year olds were in centres when their mothers were at work, 11% were cared for by fathers and 7% by relatives; less than 1% were cared for by other individuals.

It should be emphasised that these statistics do not include children with employed lone parents, for whom there is no recent information.

GREECE

The system

Compulsory schooling starts at the age of 6 years. There are two systems of **publicly-funded services for children under 6 years** - welfare and education. These systems overlap for children aged 2½ - 6 years.

Within the **welfare system,** services have been the responsibility of the Ministry of Social Welfare, which has also directly managed most of these services; the remaining services have been managed by local authorities and private organisations. However, during 1995 the Ministry transferred the services it managed to local authorities. Responsibility for services in the welfare system is now shared at national level between the Ministry of Social Welfare and the Ministry of Internal Affairs. At present, local authorities themselves can decide if and when they want to transfer from the Ministry of Social Affairs to the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

Within the welfare system there are two types of centre [see glossary - (a)(b)]; sometimes these centres, for children under and over 2½ years, share the same building but operate separately. These services are available on a full-day, all year basis.

Within the **education system**, pre-primary schooling is provided for children from 3½ years to compulsory school age [see glossary - (d)]. This service is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education. It is available during term-time, for 4 hours each morning.

Primary school hours increase as children get older from 20 hours a week (6 - 8½ years) to 24-26 hours. Because of a shortage of school buildings, many schools (especially in Athens and other large towns) operate a shift system, with children attending either morning or afternoon. The Ministry of Education is responsible for providing schools.

Publicly-funded services providing care and recreation for school-age children are very uncommon [see glossary - (f)].

Private non-subsidised services are mainly provided in centres; family day care is very uncommon.

Objectives and key concepts

The role of the pre-primary schooling is to promote the physical, emotional, social and intellectual development of children in preparation for school. The main objectives are: the development of psycho-social coordination; intellectual progress; enriching and structuring the child's experience through contact with nature and the outside world; encouraging harmonious social integration and promoting a capacity for communication and interaction with others; and developing comprehension and creative expression through oral, written and pictorial means, in particular in the fields of language, mathematics and the arts.

Services in the welfare system also have the objective of promoting children's development, but their main role is to provide care for young children who cannot receive this care in their family environment because their parents are working or for other social reasons

Main developments since 1990 EI

1. Following legislation passed in 1994, and as part of a process of decentralisation, responsibility for the management of *pediki stathmi* and other services in the welfare system managed by the Ministry of Social Welfare is being transferred in 1995 to local authorities. The Ministry of Social Welfare will continue to pay staff and other running costs; supervision of the services will be shared between this Ministry and the Ministry of Internal Affairs (which has overall responsibility for local authorities).

2. During this period, staff shortages have developed in services in the welfare system (*vrefiki stathmi* and *pediki stathmi*) as a result of attempts to control public expenditure. In December 1993 Greek newspapers reported that there were more than 3,000 staff vacancies. Some improvement is likely following a Government decision in 1995 to fill 900 vacancies.

3. During the 1995/96 school year, an increase in compulsory school age from 5½ to 6 years has been implemented, and will be fully implemented from September 1996.

4. Since 1993, 130 NOW projects have been established, including 26 centre-based services for young children and a training course for family day carers. The training course for family day carers, provided by the Family and Child Care Centre, has been the first of its kind in Greece. Although, there has always been informal care by relatives, neighbours and friends, family day care has been uncommon. The training course is the first attempt to develop this type of service, and it has had several objectives: to increase awareness of this new type of service; to set standards; to support proper recognition and good employment conditions; and to provide training. The course was organised on a modular basis, offering 240 hours of teaching spread over 12 weeks, combined with practical work in centres. However, this initiatives to train family day carers, and to stimulate family day care as a new type of service in Greece, has not been followed up; a law passed in 1992 gives family day carers the possibility of being employed within the publicly-funded system, but it has not been implemented.

Assessment of the current situation (by Vivie Papadimitriou)

Employed parents in Greece face serious problems in finding care for their children, both below compulsory school age and in the first years of primary school. A Parliamentary Committee report on demographic problems, published in September 1994, concluded that this issue of inadequate services for the children of working parents is a major factor in the decline in the birth rate (Greece now has one of the lowest birth rates in the world). The Committee recommended legislation that would require the Ministry of Social Welfare to establish services for children below compulsory school age within 2 years and following an assessment of need.

There are three main problems in Greece today. First, the limited number of services are unable

to meet the needs of employed parents. The situation is made worse by the large number of unfilled staff vacancies, due to Government attempts to reduce public expenditure. The pressure of demand and the staff shortages have also led to standards for staff: child ratios not being observed.

Second, the opening hours of services do not meet the needs of many employed parents, especially as so few have part-time jobs. Services in the welfare system close in the early afternoon. The *nipiagogia*, in the education system, are only open for 4 hours each day and there are few services providing care and recreation for school-age children.

Finally, there are now three Government Departments involved in services for children under compulsory school age - the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Welfare and the Ministry of Education. This does not encourage a coordinated and effective approach to services.

Looking forward, the transfer of responsibility for services in the welfare system from central to local government is an important development. But the absence of specialists (for example, teachers, psychologists, social workers) at local authority level may have an adverse effect on this process of decentralisation. In this context, I would like to emphasise the need for the establishment of a Scientific Institute, that will be able to study in depth issues concerning young children and their services and can provide support for the future development of services.

Glossary

Services

a. Vrefikos stathmos: centre for children from 0-30 months, open on a full-day, all year basis.
b. Pedikos stathmos: centre for children aged 2½-6 years, open for same hours as *vrefikos stathmos*.
c. Vrefonipiakos stathmos: general term to cover provision for children from 0-6 years in *vrefikos stathmos* and *pedikos stathmos*.
d. Nipiagogion: pre-primary schooling for children aged 3½-6 years, open during term-time for about 4 hours each morning.
e. Miteres filoxenias: self-employed family day carer.
f. Kentra imeras: centre providing care and recreation for school-age children.

EI

Workers in services

Vrefonipiokomi: works in *vrefikos stathmos, pedikos stathmos, vrefonipiakos stathmos*. Three years, post-18 technical/vocational training.
Nipiagogi: works in *nipiagogion*. Four years, post-18 degree course.
Miteres filoxenias: self-employed family day carer. No training is required.

Staffing standards and the regulation of private non-subsidised services

There are no national standards on staffing for services in the welfare system. Staff:child ratios in *pedikos stathmos* managed by the Ministry of Social Welfare were 2 adults for 30 children, 1 adult having a higher level training. Local authorities providing services set their own standards, generally 2 adults for 25 children.

Staff:child ratios in pre-primary schooling are usually 1 teacher for 30 children.

There is no regulation of private non-subsidised services.

Costs and funding

Until recently, the two systems of publicly-funded services have been mainly funded similarly, with services entirely funded from public sources, mainly national government, and parents making no payments. The exception was the relatively few services in the welfare system provided by local authorities, mainly in the Athens area; parents using these services were required to make a financial contribution.

This situation changed in 1995 for services in the welfare system. With the transfer of the management of these services from central government to local authorities, parents now make a contribution towards the costs based on family income.

In the education system, pre-primary schooling is funded almost entirely by the national Ministry of Education, with local authorities making a small contribution towards maintenance costs of buildings. Parents make no payments.

Tax relief is available to subsidise parents' payments for publicly-funded or private non-subsidised services

Levels of provision and how children are cared for while parents are at work

Levels of provision

Publicly-funded services for children aged 0-3 years: in 1993, there were 453 children in *vrefiki stathmi* and 48,502 in *pediki stathmi*. While all children at *vrefiki stathmi* are under 3 years, there is no information about how many children at *pediki stathmi* are under 3. If it is assumed that there is an even age distribution over the 2½-5½ year age range (compulsory schooling then started at 5½ years), then an estimated 8,100 children under 3 were attending *pediki stathmi*. On this basis, there were an estimated 8,550 children under 3 in centres, equivalent to about 3% of the age group

Publicly-funded services for children aged 3-compulsory school age (5½ in 1993): in 1993, there were an estimated 167,800 children below compulsory school age in publicly-funded services, 64% of the age group. Most children below compulsory school age (an estimated 76%) were in *nipiagogia* in the education system, the remainder (24%) in *pediki stathmi* and other services in the welfare system. Overall, the number of children attending publicly-funded services (excluding primary school) increased by 12% between 1988-93, entirely due to increased provision in the welfare system.

Publicly-funded services providing care and recreation for school-age children: these services are uncommon, but there is no information.

Privately funded services: there is no information.

How children are cared for while parents are at work

There is no information

SPAIN

The system

Spain is divided into 17 Autonomous Communities (*Comunidades Autónomas - CAs*), 7 of which have full responsibility for education services.

Compulsory schooling starts at the age of 6 years. **Publicly-funded services for children under 6 years** are mainly provided within the **education system**. They are the responsibility of the Education Departments of six autonomous communities *(CAs)* which now have responsibility for education and the national Ministry of Education and Science *(MEC)* in the other CAs.

All publicly-funded services for children under 3 years are provided in centres [see glossary - (b)(d)(g)]. Some of these centres are for children aged 0-3 years, others for children from 0-6 years. These services are generally available on a full-day, all year basis. Nearly all provision for this young age group is managed by local authorities, although some is managed by private organisations.

Most provision for children aged 3-6 years is in centres located in primary schools [see glossary - (c)(e)], although some is in age-integrated centres for children aged 0-6 years [see glossary - (d)]. Most school-based services are managed by public authorities, mainly by *MEC* and *CAs*, but some are in schools which are privately run but receive a public subsidy.

School hours are from 09.00 to 12.00 and from 15.00 to 17.00. An increasing number of schools, particularly in cities, have a service from 12.00 to 15.00 offering meals and supervised play. In schools managed by public authorities, this service is organised by parent associations, while in private schools it is organised by the schools' owners.

Also within the framework of a new law (*Ley de Ordenación General del Sistema Educativo - LOGSE*), during the last few years public authorities have begun to develop new centre-based services, for children under 3 years and their carers (usually mothers) who accompany them at the service. These services offer opportunities for play for the children and socialisation for children and their everyday carers [see glossary - (i)(j)].

Publicly-funded services for children providing care and recreation for school-aged children are uncommon. There is however an increasing and unregulated network of services providing recreation and additional learning for children outside school hours (but not care). For example, there are centres run by private companies which teach children, mainly languages and computer skills; centres (*ludotecas*), mainly run by local authorities, which offer play and other recreational activities; and centres or clubs which teach children to play different sports

Private, non-subsidised services are mainly provided in centres [see glossary - (f)] and by individual carers in children's own homes. Family day care is rare. In some cases, these services are indirectly subsidised through tax relief for parents' costs (see **Costs and Funding** box).

Objectives and key concepts

The *LOGSE* defines 0-6 years as the first stage of the education system - the 'early childhood' education stage. All services for this age group operate within the framework of the education system and have a fundamental education role, as well as other objectives. The aim of early childhood education is to contribute to the physical, social and moral development of children. Centres are considered to share with families the responsibility for offering children experiences to promote their development and to enable children to interact with adults and other children. Early childhood education is considered important in its own right and not just as a preparation for later schooling; *LOGSE* states that all children have a right to early childhood education.

The *escuela infantil 3-6*, attached to a primary school, is the most common type of service. Most of these centres are influenced by the primary school and the previous education law of 1970 rather than the principles underlying *LOGSE*. Their structure (for example, their hours of opening) is more rigid and their activities oriented to acquiring skills for later schooling.

It is in the *escuala infantil 0-3* and *escuela infantil 0-6* that the new concept of early childhood education, contained in *LOGSE*, has been most readily introduced. They have a broader and more flexible concept of education, which is not so influenced by the need to prepare children for primary school. The hours of opening are longer and better tailored to the needs of families.

Main developments since 1990

1. The period 1990-95 has seen a major advance in legislation, together with a sharp cutback in public expenditure as a result of the economic recession.

2. The *LOGSE* was passed in October 1990. This new law covers the schooling of children from 0-18 years, and treats 0-6 years as the first stage of the educational system - early childhood education. Under *LOGSE*, the national Ministry of Education and Departments of Education in those *CAs* with jurisdiction over education became responsible for all services for children from 0-6 years, laying the foundations for an integrated system of services for young children. There has also been a matching development in staff with a new basic training for working with children from 0-6 years, a specialised early childhood teacher, with the same training and status as teachers working with children in primary school.

3. In 1991, two decrees were approved which affected the quality of early childhood education. One stipulates the basic aspects of the curriculum, which covers children from 0-6 years; the other lays down minimum standards that all centres (public or private) must meet, covering space and the number and training of staff. At the present time, the draft of a new law is being debated, which increases the potential for centres to manage themselves and introduces two new elements - assessment of the centres and their staff, and authorization for school governing bodies to develop additional and extra-curricular activities.

4. This legislative progress has not been generally matched by the creation of new services; nor has there been a matching budget increase. Services for children under 3 have received least

attention. There is a policy commitment to provide schooling (either public or private) for all children aged 3-6 years by 1995.

5. The second Equal Opportunities Plan for Women (1993-1995) called for increased provision of services for children under 3 years and more flexible school hours, as well as the extension of Parental Leave and measures to promote more equal sharing of family responsibilities between men and women.

Es

Assessment of the current situation (by Irene Balaguer)

In terms of implementing the principles and objectives of the Council Recommendation on Child Care, the current Spanish situation is rather complex and contradictory in several respects. In terms of legislation and regulations, significant progress has been made, for example in terms of services for young children and, through new labour laws, promoting more equal responsibility between men and women for the care and upbringing of children. Efforts have also been made to promote more equal sharing of family responsibilities between men and women and, more generally, the reconciliation of employment and family responsibilities; at national, regional and local level, public authorities have supported public awareness campaigns, organised conferences and undertaken other actions to encourage change. Over time, this combined effort including legislation, awareness campaigns and improved training programmes will have positive effects.

But in spite of this improved legal framework and other initiatives, the daily situation of most families still does not present a harmonious relationship between employment and family responsibilities. There is a shortage of services, which has not been quantified. Relatively few women work outside the home, and those who do face difficulties exercising their rights. It is still uncommon for men to share responsibilities in the home.

For the past four years, Spain has been in a state of severe economic recession, which has adversely affected the implementation of *LOGSE*. The funding to improve quantity and quality in services has been reduced to a minimum. In the labour market, working conditions, contract conditions and pay have been under pressure, hindering real progress towards reconciliation of employment and family responsibilities.

Finally, it is important to stress that public and other social organisations, trades unions and employers need time to assimilate the new culture which supports the reconciliation of employment and family responsibilities. Public authorities must coordinate their efforts and develop more global policies. They must establish systems to gather statistical information on provision of services and the use of Parental Leave, they must increase funding for services to ensure accessibility and meet demand and they must implement a clear policy to improve the qualifications, pay and status of staff working in services for young children.

Glossary

Services

a.Escuela Infantil/Centro Docente de Educacion Infantil: generic term for all centres providing for children under 6 since the education legislation of 1990 (*LOGSE*) reformed services; the term applies to school based services and services independent of schools but emphasises the educational orientation of all centres. The terms for different centres given below indicate whether they cover children in the first cycle (0-3 years) or second cycle (3-6 years) of the early childhood stage of education, or both cycles.

b.Escuela Infantil 0-3: centre for children aged 0-3 years, usually located apart from primary school and open on a full-day, all year basis.

c.Escuela Infantil 3-6: centre for children aged 3-6 years, usually located on the premises of a primary school. Usually open for the same hours as primary, on a term-time basis.

d.Escuela Infantil 0-6: centre for children aged 0-6 years, usually located apart from primary school and open on a full-day, all year basis.

e.Centro de Preescolar: similar to (c).

f.Guarderia Infantil: usually private centres for children aged 0-3 years or 0-6 years and usually with no links with primary schools. Usually open on a full-day and all year basis, often with very long opening hours.

g.Llar d'infants: Catalan term similar to (b), used since 1983 when all centres in Catalonia became the responsibility of education authorities. Another term in Catalan for these centres is *escola bressol*, usually applied to centres with a strong connection to the education reform movement.

h.Parvulari: Catalan term similar to (c).

i. Casa de las ninõs: centre for children aged 0-3 years or 0-6 years and their main everyday carers, offering flexible and diversified opening hours and opportunities for play and socialisation

j. Espai familiar: Catalan term similar to (i).

Workers in Services

Maestro: specialist early childhood teacher who works *escuela infantil* with children from 0-6 years. Three years post-18 University training.

Técnico especialista en educación infantil: works in *escuela infantil* with children from 0-6 years. One to two years post-16 training.

Educador: works in *escuela infantil 0-3*. One year post-18 training.

Puericultura: term used before *LOGSE* for workers with children under 3 years. Training varied from 3 months to 1 year.

Profesor: term used before *LOGSE* for specialist working with young children; still in common usage, although the official term is now *maestro*.

Monitor: works with groups of children of all ages in services providing care and recreation for school-age children. There are no official standard training requirements.

Staffing standards and the regulation of private non-subsidised services

National standards on staff: child ratios are 1 adult for 7 children under 12 months, 1 adult for 10 children aged 12-23 months, 1 adult for 18 children aged 24-35 months and 1 adult for 25 children aged 3-6 years. Several *CAs* and local authorities operate higher levels of staffing. For children under 3 years, 33% of staff must be trained teachers (*maestros);* for children over 3 years, there must be a minimum of 4 *maestros* for 3 groups of children.

Private non-subsidised centre-based services should be approved by public authorities, and meet the national standards on staffing. Regulation of these services is the responsibility of *MEC* or *CAs*.

Costs and funding

Despite moves to develop an integrated system of services for children under compulsory school age, considerable differences remain in the funding of services for children under and over 3 years. Public funding for services for children under 3 years managed by local authorities mainly comes from local authorities, with some additional funding from *CAs*; for these services, public funding usually accounts for over 80% of costs. The main source of public funding for services managed by private organisations is the *CAs*, and some services get support from the Ministry of Social Affairs; however public funding for these services usually accounts for less than 50% of total costs.

Parents also contribute to costs. There are a variety of formulas used to calculate parental payments, but they usually take account of family income and numbers of children. Parental contributions vary. They normally pay half or more of the costs in privately managed centres but less than 20% in services managed by public authorities.

For children aged 3-6 years, the funding and cost to parents for those attending centres which are not part of schools is the same as for children under 3 years. School-based services are funded by *MEC* or *CAs*. Parents make no payments in schools provided by public authorities, but may pay fees in schools managed by private organisations; the level of fees may vary from area to area.

Tax relief is available for children under 3 years to subsidise parents' payments for publicly-funded services or for private non-subsidised services, where both parents are employed outside the home and if net income is below a specified level.

Es

Levels of provision and how children are cared for while parents are at work

Levels of provision

National statistics refer only to school-based and other centres; family day care, however, is uncommon so that the statistics cover most formal services. The statistics distinguish between services that are managed publicly and services managed privately, but not between services that are publicly-funded and those that receive no public funds. Some privately managed services, particularly those for children aged 3-6 years located within private primary schools, receive public subsidies; for children under 3 years, the statistics may be less complete and may not include some publicly-funded services provided by local authorities.

There are large differences between levels of provision in *CAs*. For example, Catalonia, Valencia and the Basque Country have provision (public and private) for over 10% of 2 year olds, while 10 *CAs* have provision for less than 4%; and while Aragon Catalonia, Leon, Navarre and the Basque Country have provision for more than 75% of 3 year olds, 6 *CAs* have provision for less than 50%.

Publicly-funded services for children aged 0-3 years: in 1993/94 there were centre-based services for about 5% of this age group in public and private centre, increasing from 0.8% of children under 12 months to 11% of 2 year olds. Publicly managed services provide places for only about 2% of this age group.

Publicly-funded services for children aged 3-compulsory school age (6 years): in 1993/94, there were services in schools and other centres for 84% of this age group. Nearly all 4 and 5 year olds attend a service, but only 53% of 3 year olds. Publicly managed services provide two-thirds of the places for this age group, and places are still being created for 3 year olds.

Publicly-funded services providing care and recreation for school-aged children: these is no information.

Privately funded services: there is no information. Most centre-based provision for children under 3 is in private centres, most of which are not publicly funded.

How children are cared for while parents are at work

There is no information

FRANCE

The system

Compulsory schooling starts at the age of 6 years. There are two systems of **publicly-funded services for children under 6 years** - welfare and education. These systems overlap for children aged 24-36 months.

Within the **welfare system,** services are the responsibility of the Ministry of Social Affairs, Health and Towns at national level and of local authorities at local level. Elected authorities (*Conseil Général*) at the level of *Départements* also play a role, being responsible for approving private services and providing some subsidies. In addition, an important role is played by *départemental* family allowance funds (*Caisses d'Allocations Familiale - CAFs),* and their national organisation *(Caisse Nationale d'Allocations Familiale - CNAF)*; they subsidise services in general and stimulate development through the *contrats enfance* programme, in which CAFs sign co-finance agreements with local authorities to support the expansion of services for children under 6 years.

Within the welfare system there are several types of centre [see glossary - (a)(b)(c)(d)] and organised family day care [see glossary - (e)]. These services are available on a full-day, all year basis, except for *haltes-garderie*s which provide occasional care, and regular part-time care in some cases, and take children up to 6 years. Two thirds of publicly-funded *crèches* are managed by local authorities and half of *haltes-garderie*s. The rest are managed by private organisations; these organisations manage most *jardin d'enfants*.

Within the **education system**, pre-primary schooling is provided for children from 2 years to compulsory school age. This service is the responsibility of the national Ministry of Education, although local authorities are responsible for providing non-teaching staff, and lunch and supervision during the break in the middle of the day. It is available during term-time and for the same hours as primary school [see glossary - (f)].

Primary school hours are from 08.30 to 16.30 on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday + Saturday mornings; schools are closed all day Wednesday. Children whose parents work (and sometimes other children) can have lunch at school if the school has a canteen.

Publicly-funded services providing care and education for school-age children are provided in centres [see glossary - (g)(h)]. *Garderie périscolaire* are school-based and managed by local authorities. *Centre de Loisirs sans Hérbergement* may be located in school premises or independent of schools; most are managed by private organisations. At national level, they are the responsibility of the Ministry for Youth and Sport.

Private non-subsidised services are mainly provided by family day carers or carers working in children's homes [see glossary (j)(k)]. These services are indirectly subsidised through tax relief for parents' costs and other payments (see **Costs and Funding** box).

Objectives and key concepts

The main criteria for admission to services in the welfare system for children under 3 years is parental employment; the priority given to children who are 'at risk' depends on each local authority. Within this context, the main concern of these services is to understand the needs of the child and provide him or her with stimulating situations which promote development. To support these objectives, each service is recommended to produce a *projet d'établissement,* which is intended to define its identity. This *projet d'établissement* specifies the educational and cultural orientation of the service, ways in which parents participate in the life of the establishment and exchanges of information between parents and workers. External support is also available to support artistic and cultural work with the children (eg. with music, books).

The general objective of the *école maternelle* is to develop the full potential of the child, to form his or her personality and to give the child the best chance of success in school and in life. The three specific objectives are to introduce children to school, to socialise them and for children to learn. However, a 1986 government circular stressed that *écoles maternelles* have different functions from services in the welfare system; in particular, they are not centres providing care.

The *centres de loisirs sans hébergement* provide a service for children outside school hours and they are open to all children, whether or not their parents are employed. These centres are the responsibility of the *services de jeunesse et sports* of the local *département*. They have qualified staff and a pedagogical orientation; they must have a pedagogical programme (*projet éducatif*), which has been agreed with the *services de jeunesse et sports*; this *projet éducatif* defines objectives, methods of work etc. These services are a meeting point for educational and social policies. By contrast, the main objective of *garderies périscolaires* is to care for children while parents are at work, and the staff generally have little or no qualifications.

Main developments since 1990

1. In January 1991, improved financial support was provided for families using an *assistante maternelle agréée - Aide à la Famille pour l'Emploi d'une Assistante Maternelle Agréée* (AFEAMA) (see **Costs and Funding** box).

2. A law introduced in July 1992 modified the procedure for the approval of *assistantes maternelles* by public authorities and made it compulsory for them to receive training (see **Glossary - workers in services** box).

3. The *contrat enfance* programme, introduced in 1988, has supported a steady increase in services for children under 6 years, including *crèches* and *haltes-garderies.* An average of 300 *contrats* have been signed per year; by the beginning of 1995, 1700 *contrats* had been signed with 2500 local authorities, covering 40% of children aged 0-6 years; 35,000 places have been created in *crèches,* while more than 100,000 children can use new places in *haltes-garderies, garderie périscolaire* and *centres de loisirs.*

4. A new law to help conciliate employment and family life was passed in July 1994. As

well as improvements in Parental Leave, the law improves support for services for young children. Improvements include: increased grants to families receiving *AFEAMA*; an increase in the level of AGED, and its extension to children aged 3-5 years (see **Costs and funding** box); and increased funding by *CAFs* for services for children under 6 years. Funding by *CAFs* will increase by FF 600 million a year for five years (ie. it will have increased by FF 3 billion by 1999), and will be divided between increased funding for existing services and new *contrats enfance*.

Assessment of the Current Situation (by Martine Felix)

Fr

Despite considerable local differences in services for young children, especially those under 3 years, some general comments can be made. On the positive side, two points should be emphasised. First, the impetus from *CAFs* and *contrats enfance* have supported a steady development of services and increased public expenditure. Second, there has been a development of *relais assistantes maternelles*, whose objective is to improve the service provided by *assistantes maternelles* and to support increased contact between *assistantes maternelles* and parents.

On the negative side, it has been disappointing that the government proposal that local authorities must prepare plans for the development of services for young children was not adopted by Parliament; it has been left as a discretionary power, rather then a duty. I also regret that the 1975 regulation on services for young children in the welfare system has not been implemented. This would have introduced more flexibility into the operation of these services by means of a balance between health and educational considerations.

There are several issues which raise important questions. The main political preoccupation is the reduction of unemployment. Policies are placing emphasis on mothers caring for children, supported by different types of allowances. What is the relevance of this social policy which aims to exclude women, and its implications for the equality of opportunity between men and women and between children? What is the underlying ideology and what are the long-term consequences? To ignore the position of the father and to reinforce the mother-child bond amounts to avoiding an essential debate about parenting.

Changes in the labour market which mainly affect women (part-time employment, unemployment etc.) disturb the system of services; the services are in crisis because they face an imbalance in their traditional clientele. The social mix is difficult to maintain and this is made more difficult by the measures encouraging children to be cared for in the home. In this context, it is difficult to predict the development of services. Their future will depend heavily on their ability to adapt and become more flexible in function, how they are viewed by parents and their ability to work together. It will be necessary to respond to the real needs of families whose main difficulties involve the services' adaptation to their differing timetables.

Finally, work is needed to ensure the quality of provision for 2 year olds in *écoles maternelles*, which is not always satisfactory; for example, facilities for rest and sleep must be improved. It

must also be a priority to reduce the number of children in each class and to ensure conditions for learning that are more suited to the individual needs of very young children. Given these conditions, the *écoles maternelles* can play a positive role in the reduction of social inequalities, established as a principle in the framework law on education of July 1989.

In the same way, the *lieux-passerelles* [see glossary - (i)], intended mainly for disadvantaged 2 year olds, prepare their transition from the family to the *école maternelle*. Giving children the taste and means to learn and helping parents to demystify educational establishments are essential objectives for citizenship. These services must therefore be valued more.

Glossary

Services

a. Crèche collective: centre for children aged 0-36 months, open on a full-day, all year basis.
b. Crèche parentale: centre for children aged 0-36 months, open on a full-day, all year basis. Its distinguishing feature is that it is managed by an association of parents, who may also work with the children alongside qualified workers.
c. Crèche familiale: organised family day care for children aged 0-36 months; there is an average of 30 family day carers per *crèche familiale*. Supervised by 1 worker for every 40 family day carers.
d. Halte-garderie: centre for children from 0-6 years, but mainly used for children under 3 years. Opening hours vary, according to local needs; sometimes every day, sometimes only on certain days. They provide occasional care and, sometimes, regular part-time care.
e. Jardin d'enfants: centre for children aged 2-6 years, open on a full-day, all year basis. They are not very common.
f. Ecole maternelle: pre-primary schooling for children aged 2-6 years, open during term-time from 08.30 to 16.30, but usually closed on Wednesdays. Children can stay during the two hour lunch break if the local authority provides lunch and supervision.
g. Garderie périscolaire: school-based service providing care and recreation for children at *école maternelle*, available outside school hours, but not during school holidays.
h. Centre de Loisirs sans Hébergement (CLSH): centre providing care and recreation for school-age children (under and over 6 years), available outside school hours, on Wednesdays and during school holidays, usually open from 08.00 to 18.00 or 19.00. It may be located in a school or completely separate from school.
i. Lieu-passerelle: centre for young children (2-3 year olds) and their parents to help the transition and integration of children from disadvantaged families into *écoles maternelles*. Recent development and still not very common.
j. Assistante maternelle: family day carer either employed by a public authority in a *crèche familiale* or as a self-employed family day carer. For children aged 0-36 months on full-day basis and older children when not at school.

Fr

Workers in services

Puéricultrice: works in *crèche collective* or *familiale*, usually as director. Four years post-18 training as medical nurse.
Auxiliare de puéricultrice: works in *crèche collective* and *halte-garderie*. One year post-16 training.
Educatrice/educateur jeunes enfants: works in *crèche collective, familiale, parentale, halte-garderie* and *jardin d'enfants* Two years post-18 training.
Assistante maternelle : family day carer either employed in *crèche familiale* or self-employed. No initial training required, but must receive a minimum of 60 hours training in the 5 years following approval, of which 20 hours must be received during the first two years.
Institutrice/Instituteur: works in *école maternelle* or can be a director of *a CLSH*. Five years post-18 degree course.
Agent Spécialisé des Ecoles Maternelles (ASEM): works in *crèche collective, école maternelle* and *garderie périscolaire*. No initial training but must acquire *Certificat d'Aptitude Professionnel petite enfance* through one year work experience in an approved establishment and continuous training.
Animateur: works in *CLSH*. Often students. Nearly half have *Brevet d'Aptitude aux Fonctions d'Animation (BAFA)*, based on 26 day training; another third are training. For directors of *CLSHs* - **directeurs** - there is a further 15 day training leading to *Brevet d'Aptitude aux Fonctions de Directeur* (BAFD).

Staffing standards and the regulation of private non-subsidised services

Staff:child ratios in centres within the welfare system are 1 adult for 5 children who are not yet walking and 1 adult for 8 older children under 3 years. Half of the staff must be qualified as *auxiliare de puéricultrice*, and if there are more than 40 places, there must be at least one *educatrice de jeunes enfants*. In a *crèche familiale* there should be no more than 3 children per *assistante maternelle* at any one time. The director of a *crèche collective* or *familiale* must be an *éducatrice* or a *puéricultrice*.

Staff:child ratios in pre-primary schooling in 1993/94 averaged 1 *institutrice* for 27 children. *Institutrices* can be assisted by an *ASEM*; each school, but not necessarily each group, has one of these assistants.

In a *garderie périscolaire*, there must be 1 adult for 10 children (who are aged 2- 6 years), but there are no standards concerning staff training. The director of a *CLSH* may be trained as an *instituteur* or an *éducateur*, or have the qualification of *BAFA* or *BAFD*.

Private non-subsidised services, including family day care, should be approved by public authorities. The regulation of these services is the responsibility of the maternal and infant welfare services provided by the *Conseil Général* in each *Département*. A private family day carer should have no more than 3 children, including her own.

Costs and funding

The two systems of publicly-funded services are funded differently. In the welfare system, public funding comes from a number of sources, the most important being local authorities and *CAFs*. Parents contribute to costs, usually on the basis of a formula produced by CNAF which takes account of family income and numbers of children. In 1993, parents' contributions covered, on average, 28% of the total costs of *crèches (collective, familiale)* and 23% of the costs of *halte-garderies*, local authorities 34% and 47% respectively and *CAFs* 23% and 22%. The same system applies to services providing care and recreation for school-age children. In 1993, parents' contributions covered 25% of the cost of *CLSHs*, local authorities 47% and *CAFs* 19%.

In the education system, pre-primary schooling is funded by the national Ministry of Education and local authorities. Parents make no payments.

Tax relief is available for children under 6 years to subsidise parents' payments for publicly-funded services or for private non-subsidised services. In addition, parents using a self-employed *assistante maternelle agréée* for children under 6 years receive financial support (*Aide à la Famille pour l'Emploi d'une Assistante Maternelle Agréée*) which consists of a financial grant and a payment made by *CAFs* direct to *URSSAF*, to cover parents' social security contributions as the employer of an *assistante maternelle*. Finally parents employing a carer in their own home for children under 6 years can claim an allowance (*Allocation de garde d'enfant à domicile - AGED*), to cover both the employer's and employee's social security contributions.

Levels of provision and how children are cared for while parents are at work

Levels of provision

Publicly-funded services for children aged 0-3 years: at the end of 1993, there were 442,300 places (excluding *haltes-garderies)*, 20% of the age group. More than half of these (250,000) were for two year olds in *écoles maternelles;* the remainder were divided between *crèche collective* (118,500), *crèche parentale (*8,200) and *crèche familiale* (65,600). In addition, there were a further 60,000 places in *haltes-garderies*; it is estimated that each place in a *halte-garderie* is used on average by 5 children, so that 325,000 children benefitted from this service. If places in *haltes-garderies* are included, then there are places in these services for 23% of the age group.

Overall, the number of places in these services increased by 21% between 1988 and 1993; places at *écoles maternelles* increased by 14%, in *crèche collective* by 32%, in *crèche familiale* by 15% and in *haltes garderies* by 41%.

Fr

Publicly-funded services for children aged 3-compulsory school age (6 years): at the end of 1993, there were 2,224,000 places in *écoles maternelles*, and a further 11,800 places in *jardins d'enfants*, equivalent to 99% of the age group. Overall, the number of places increased by 12% between 1988 and 1993.

Publicly-funded services providing care and recreation for school-age children: at the end of 1993, there were 278,000 places for children aged 3-6 years in *CLSHs*, 12% of the population. There were a further 905,000 places in *CLSHs* for children of compulsory school age, equivalent to 30% of children aged 6 - 10 years (although the actual rate may be lower because some of the places will be for children over 10 years). Between 1988 and 1993, the number of places in *CLSHs* increased by 25%.

Privately funded services: at the end of 1993 there were places for 403,000 children aged 0-6 years with *assistantes maternelles agréées* (an average of 1.9 places for each *assistante maternelle)*, with 262,000 for children under 3 years and 140,000 for children aged 3-6 years (ie. receiving care outside school hours). In addition, it has been estimated by CNAF that 155,000 children under 3 years were being cared for either by a relative or by a paid carer working in the child's own home; and a further 265,000 were in non-approved family day care.

How children are cared for while parents are at work

In 1993, of children under 3 with an employed mother, 250,000 attended an *école maternelle*, 400,000 were cared for in another publicly-funded service or by an *assistante maternelle agréée*, 155,000 were cared for by a relative or other carer in their own home and 300,000 were cared for in some other way.

IRELAND

The system

Compulsory schooling starts at the age of 6 years. There are two systems of **publicly-funded services for children under 6 years** - welfare and education; these systems overlap for children aged 3-6 years.

Within the **welfare system,** services are the responsibility of the national Ministry of Health and there are two types of centre [see glossary - (a)(d)(e)]. *Nurseries* are available on a full-day, all year basis; *playgroups* are usually open during term-time for part of the day. These publicly-funded services are always managed by private organisations.

Within the **education system,** children aged 3-6 years can be admitted early to primary school, that is before compulsory schooling begins. In addition, pre-primary schooling is being developed in a number of disadvantaged areas (see **Main developments since 1990**, point 2). Both types of service are the responsibility of the national Ministry of Education. They are available during term-time; children admitted early to primary school attend for normal school hours while pre-primary schooling operates on a part-time, shift basis [see glossary - (f)(g)].

Primary school hours increase as children get older, from 4 hours 40 minutes a day up to the age of 6 years to 5 hours 40 minutes for children over 6 years. There is a 30 minute supervised lunch break; some children considered to be 'in need' are provided with a packed lunch. Schools are the responsibility of the national Ministry of Education.

Publicly-funded services providing care and recreation for school-age children are uncommon. Where found, they are usually provided in *nurseries* and *community playgroups* which have extended their service to take some school-age children.

Private non-subsidised services are provided by family day carers and in centres, most frequently in *playgroups* [see glossary - (b)(c)(j)].

Objectives and key concepts

Social service nurseries are for children of families considered to be 'at risk' due to social and economic disadvantage; although the main aims of these services are social support and care for children of these 'at risk' families, many have a developmental and pedagogical element. *Playgroups* are defined by their organisation, the *Irish Pre-school Playgroup Association* as providing children with the opportunity of "*exploring, discovering and adjusting socially through a play situation, under the guidance of responsible adults who are aware of the needs of pre-school children*". *Naionrai* have similar aims to *playgroups* in general, but with the added objective of fostering the acquisition of the Irish language.

Early primary education is intended to promote children's development, and lay the foundations for later education; it is child-centred and emphasises discovery learning. *Pre-school centres* are

being established as part of an educational interventionist programme specifically for children from disadvantaged areas. The objective is the personal, social and cognitive development of children and their preparation for entry to primary education on an equal footing with children who are not disadvantaged.

Main developments since 1990

1. Legislation passed in 1991, the *Child Care Act*, introduced the principle of the regulation of centre-based services for young children in the welfare system, in particular *nurseries* and *playgroups*. Regulation of these services will specify health, welfare, safety and physical environmental standards, as well as promotion of child development; all providers of these services must notify health boards, and will be inspected by them. However, this part of the Act has not been implemented, and the consultations that will precede preparation of the regulations are only scheduled to begin in early 1996.

2. The most significant development in the public sector has been the introduction of pre-primary schooling. In 1994, the *Early Start Programme* was introduced; it is the first national development of pre-primary schooling within the education system. Eight new centres were set up in areas designated as disadvantaged, each linked with a primary school and the responsibility of the Boards of Management of these schools. The programme is being evaluated by external assessors and a Monitoring Committee has been set up by the Minister of Education, prior to the programme's extension in 1995 to a further 25 *Early Start* centres. It is hoped that further resources will be released to extend pre-primary schooling, as the effects of the falling birth rate are increasingly felt in the primary school system.

3. There have been two Government reports of particular relevance - *the Second Commission on the Status of Women* (1993) and the *Working Group on Childcare Facilities for Working Parents* (1994). The implementation of these reports is the responsibility of the Department of Equality and Law Reform, established in 1993. These reports have been used as a reference base for measures to develop services for young children in the Community Support Framework (CSF) for Ireland (1994-1999) The CSF states that "*it is envisaged that special emphasis will be placed on childcare development to facilitate participation by women in development activities*". To this end, a number of government agencies have funded services or training of workers as part of programmes to promote job creation and training and to counter unemployment. To date the emphasis has been mainly on disadvantaged areas and areas of high unemployment.

4. The *National Council for Vocational Awards*, established in 1991, has developed a comprehensive system of qualifications, including the award of a certificate for workers in services for young children in the welfare system. *National Vocational Awards* are offered at four levels, covering a wide range of occupations. Awards are modular in structure, with each module self-contained and designed to be completed in 80 hours of directed learning. A Level 2 Award in Childcare has been offered and awarded; Levels 1 and 3 are in process of development.

The inclusion of awards for workers in childcare services within this new national vocational training framework is a significant advance in improving the quality of childcare training and services. Also by accrediting previous learning, the new awards will introduce much needed coherence into the present training system, where at present there is a large number of courses on offer from private colleges and voluntary organisations in addition to the nationally accredited courses.

5. The care of children outside school hours has so far been provided by informal arrangements involving family and neighbours. Awareness of the need for formal services can be seen in the recent development of a small number of services, attached to existing publicly-funded *nurseries*, which are providing care and recreation for school-age children. Similar services have also developed within private centres.

Assessment of the current situation (by Anne McKenna)

In the period since 1990, increased government spending on services for young children has been targeted on children in disadvantaged areas, through the *Early Start Programme*, and on children with parents in national training schemes, via the application of EU Structural Funds. Overall, however, there has been no increase in funding for services for children with working parents. With increasing numbers of employed mothers, the consequence has been a growth of private, non-subsidised services.

Dependence on these private services raises the important question of affordability. The position in Ireland at present for families wanting services for their young children is that either the state pays everything for a relatively small number of families or the parents pay everything; there is no sharing of costs for families not considered to be in social need. While the costs of private services can be met by dual-earner, professional families, this is impossible for low paid families and difficult for middle income families.

The knock-on effects of the high cost of good services can be seen from the statistics on women's employment. The percentage of highly qualified women in the labour market in Ireland is double that of women with minimal qualifications (70% v 35%). This is due, at least in part, to the fact that qualifications lead to well paid jobs and an increased ability to pay for private services.

The criterion of affordability, as set out in Article 3 of the Council Recommendation on Child Care, applies to all parents who are working or wish to work - and not just for certain groups such as parents living in disadvantaged areas, parents in families considered to be at risk, lone parents, parents of children with special needs and parents in training. Ireland therefore is a long way from meeting this important criterion.

The *Early Start Programme*, implemented by the Department of Education, does fulfil several of the Recommendation's criteria. For example, the programme incorporates principles of education and care; and by liaising with existing community services, it is attempting to encourage greater coherence in the overall system of services for young children.

There has been substantial growth in family day care services in the private, non-subsidised sector. It is therefore regrettable that this growing source of services (and jobs) is specifically excluded from the *Child Care Act 1991*; a family day carer will have to notify the authorities only if she cares for four or more children, excluding her own. Although the part of the *Child Care Act* which regulates some private services has not yet been implemented, it is having some effect already as both private providers and trainers are beginning to show increased interest in upgrading standards to meet the anticipated new standards.

Glossary

Services

a. Social services nursery: publicly-funded centre for children aged 3-60 months, although few have children under 12 months. Usually open on a full-day, all year basis.
b. Nursery: private centre for children aged 3-60 months, with similar opening hours to *social services nursery*. **Workplace nurseries** are provided for the children of staff in a particular workplace.
c. Private playgroup: centre for children aged 3-6 years, usually open during term-time for 3-4 hour 'sessions' a day and between 2 to 5 days a week; they are mainly provided in private houses.
d.Community playgroups: centre for children aged 3-6 years, provided in a community hall or school premises and managed by a parent committee; generally open for 4-5 sessions a week. Some receive public funding.
e. Naionrai: Irish-language *playgroups*.
f. Pre-school centres: centres providing pre-primary schooling for 60 children aged 2-6 years, established in 33 disadvantaged areas and with close links to primary schools. Open during term-time and operating a part-time shift system; children attend for either 2½ hours in the morning or in the afternoon. There are no lunch facilities.
g. Early primary education: provision in primary school for children before compulsory school age (4 and 5 year olds), open during term-time from 09.00 to 13.00, with a packed lunch provided for children from disadvantaged homes.
h. School-age childcare: service providing care and recreation for school-age children, available outside school hours, offered in some *nurseries* (publicly-funded and private) and *community playgroups*.
j. Childminder: self-employed family day carer for children from 3 months upwards.

Workers in services

Pre-school care workers/childcare workers/nursery assistants: work in *nurseries (Social services, private or workplace)* and as assistants in *pre-school centres*. Usually two years, post-18 training.
Playgroup leader: works in *playgroup (private, community* or *naionrai)*. 120 hour basic training, provided by playgroup organisations.
Teacher: works in *pre-school centres* or *early primary education*. Three years post-18 degree course.
Childminder: No basic training required.
See also *National Vocational Awards* in section on **Main developments since 1990**, point 4.

Staffing standards and the regulation of private non-subsidised services

There are no national standards on staffing for services in the welfare system. For the centres they finance, Health Boards recommend: 1 adult for 3 children under 12 months; 1 adult for 5 children aged 12-29 months; and 1 adult for 8 children aged 30-59 months. It is also recommended that at least the director of the centre should have a recognised qualification.

Staff:child ratios for 3-6 year olds in *early primary education* average 1 *teacher* for 35 children. For 3-6 year olds in *pre-school centres*, there are 2 adults for every group of 15 children, a *teacher* and an assistant.

At present, there is no regulation of private non-subsidised services. Regulations will be introduced in 1996, applying to centre-based services (eg.*nurseries, playgroups)* and to *childminders* who care for four or more children, excluding their own.

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Costs and funding

The two systems of publicly-funded services are funded differently. In the welfare system, public funding comes from regional health boards which pay most of the costs. Parents are encouraged to make a small contribution.

In the education system, *early primary education* and *pre-school centres* are funded by the national Ministry of Education. Parents make no payments.

There is no system of tax reduction or cash grants to parents to subsidise the costs of using services.

Levels of provision and how children are cared for while parents are at work

Levels of provision

Statistics on publicly-funded provision refer to the number of children attending services whose fees are subsidised by public authorities, and not the number of places in publicly-funded services. There are no official statistics on private, non-subsidised services.

Publicly-funded services for children aged 0-3 years: in 1993, there were approximately 2,920 children whose fees were subsidised by public authorities, 2% of the age group. However, only 30% of these children attended *nurseries* on a full-day basis; the rest attended *community playgroups* on a part-time basis.

Publicly-funded services for children aged 3-compulsory school age (6 years): in 1993, there were 86,175 children in this age group attending publicly-funded *early primary education*, 52% of the age group; in fact, few 3 year olds attend (1% in 1991), just over half of all 4 year olds (55%) and nearly all 5 year olds (99%). The number of children attending decreased by 15% between 1988 and 1993 as the child population fell.

In addition, there were approximately 5,830 children in centres in the welfare system whose fees were subsidised by public authorities, 3% of the age group. About a fifth of these children attended *nurseries* on a full-day basis, most of the rest attending *community playgroups* on a part-time basis.

Overall, the number of children using subsidised places in centres in the welfare system increased by 20% between 1988 and 1993.

Publicly-funded services providing care and recreation for school-aged children: these services are uncommon, but there is no information.

Privately funded services: there are no information on the number of places or children attending at private, non-subsidised services. However, it is estimated that in 1991 there were nearly 22,500 children attending *playgroups,* most on an non-subsidised basis; about 20% of these children were aged 2 years, the rest 3-6 years.

How children are cared for while parents are at work

There is no precise information. A recent study of children beginning school suggests that a *playgroup* is the most common type of early childhood experience, followed by relatives and *childminders*. The study concludes that relatives and *childminders* are the most common types of care for children with working parents.

ITALY

The system

Compulsory schooling starts at the age of 6 years. There are two systems of **publicly-funded services for children under 6 years** - welfare and education. Services for children under 3 years are mainly provided in centres [see glossary - (a)(b)]. These *asili nido* are the responsibility of the Ministry of Health, and therefore part of the welfare system at national level. However, nearly all centres for children under 3 are managed by local authorities, and in most cases these services are the responsibility of local authority Departments of Education; so at local level they are treated as part of the education system.

The legislation that transferred responsibility for the provision of *asili nido* to local authorities, adopted in 1971, also gave responsibility to regional governments to plan the development of this provision and to define general criteria for buildings, management, monitoring and control. For many years, except in a few cases, this responsibility has been located in Departments of Social Affairs at regional level, but recently Departments of Education have been given powers to assume this responsibility. As well as their legal responsibilities and financial support for local authorities, regional governments can also promote services in a number of other ways: in co-operation with local authorities, they can support continuous training, initiate projects to improve quality and develop measures to improve coordination between different types of services.

Asili nido are usually available on a full-day, all year basis. In the last few years, however, local authorities (mainly in Northern and Central Italy) have begun to develop new centre-based services, more diversified and flexible than *asili nido*, and in particular offering opportunities for play and socialisation for children aged 0-6 years and their everyday carers [see glossary - (d)]. These *nuove tipologie* may be located in existing *asili nido* or in separate, purpose-built premises. They also operate in a variety of ways: for example, they may be open every day of the week, operating as a *nido part-time* in the morning, for children with parents in part-time jobs, then operating as a play centre in the afternoon for other children attending with their carers; or they may operate only as part-time play centres, for a few hours a day and a few days per week. Generally, carers (parents, grandparents, baby-sitters) are expected to attend with the children, and to work with the staff, but this is not always required.

Within the **education system**, pre-primary schooling is provided for children from 3 until compulsory school age. There are many State-run schools, managed by the national Ministry of Education (just over half of all schools in 1991/92), but schools can also be managed by local authorities or private organisations (mostly religious). Pre-primary schooling is available during term-time, but the opening hours vary. By law, State-run schools must be open at least 8 hours a day, and up to 10 hours; schools run by local authorities and private organisations are also open for these hours. Generally, schools are open for longer hours in Northern Italy. In 1991/92, 72% of children attended for 5-8 hours a day and 17% for more than 8 hours [see glossary - (c)].

Primary school hours, reformed in 1990, are between 27 and 30 hours a week and may be

organised in a variety of ways according to the wishes of parents and the circumstances of the school (for example, whether it has a canteen, the number of teachers etc). For example, some schools, especially in the South, are open from 8.30 to 13.00, 6 days a week; while other schools are open 5 days a week, with afternoon sessions for 2 of these days. In 1991/92, 17% of children attended 'full-time' schools, that is 8 hours a day for 5 days a week, including a lunch break and 13% of children had lunch at school [see glossary - (e)].

Publicly-funded services providing care and recreation for school-age children can take various forms including school-based services and centres separate from school. School-based services are generally not staffed by teachers, although some pilot projects involving teachers working extended hours are now taking place in primary schools. They are generally managed by local authorities and are mostly found in larger towns (see glossary - (f)(g)].

Private non-subsidised services are mainly provided by carers working in children's own homes; family day care is rare.

Objectives and key concepts

The 1971 law that passed responsibility for *asili nido* to local and regional governments defines the main aims of these services as providing care of children to support families and women's employment. However, the local authorities which manage most *asili nido* have increasingly regarded them also as centres for the education and socialisation of children, the development of their potential and well-being and the promotion of a children's culture, as well as offering a preventive service for children 'at risk' or otherwise disadvantaged.

The more recently developed services - *nuove tipologie/servizi integrativi* - are intended to offer opportunities for socialisation, education and play for children, especially those who do not already attend other services. They are particularly concerned with the needs of non-employed parents and other carers (who may also include grandparents caring for grandchildren) and parents who want care for their children but not for a full day (for example, because they work only in the mornings or prefer a mix of arrangements such as grandparents and *nuove tipologia).* They provide parents, in particular mothers, and children, often the only child in a family, with the possibility of escape from loneliness and isolation and the chance to meet other children and adults.

The main objectives of *scuole materne/scuole dell'infanzia,* as defined in a 1968 law for State-run schools, are, besides education, children's development and preparation for compulsory schooling, and supporting families through providing care.

Main developments since 1990

1. In 1990, new legislation was passed reforming primary schooling. The Act reorganised school hours, increasing the hours children attend; improved continuity between primary, pre-primary and secondary schooling; increased staffing levels; and established continuous training for teachers.

2. New guidelines were issued in 1991 for State-run *scuole materne/scuole dell'infanzia*. They recognise the right of children to quality schooling, with direct parental involvement and close cooperation with other locally based services. They stress the enhancement of identity and development of autonomy for children, and envisage a syllabus that pays attention to child development and acquisition of cognitive, social and emotional skills. Unfortunately the national plan for the continuous training of teachers in *scuole materna/scuole dell'infanzia*, that accompanied the guidelines, has not been implemented in a consistent and coherent way throughout the country.

3. In 1992, new legislation was passed to promote support, social integration and rights of people with disabilities. The Act defines the right to attend educational services, including *asili nido*, with extra assistance from support teachers, the coordination of education, social and health services and additional leave arrangements and tax relief for parents with a disabled child.

4. Between 1990 and 1992, different political groups presented two proposals for laws concerning the development and quality of *asili nido* and the adoption of framework regulations for *scuole materne/scuole dell'infanzia* run by public and private agencies; unfortunately, Parliamentary debate on both of these proposals was stopped at a preliminary stage. In March 1993, a 'public initiative' proposal for legislation on *asili nido*, supported by 150,000 signatures, was presented to the Chamber of Deputies; the proposal is still pending (at the end of 1995).

5. The period has seen a significant development in the North and Centre of *servizi integrativi*, which supplement the network of *asili nido* and *scuole materne/scuole dell'infanzia*, offering a more flexible range of services, able to respond to the increasingly diverse needs of families.

Assessment of the current situation (by Patrizia Orsola Ghedini)

Concerning services for young children, there are a number of fundamental issues for which no solution has been found so far:

- Large differences in the quantity and quality of services between different areas of the country: in the North, there are areas where *asili nido* serve about 30% of children and staff have received continuous training for many years; while in other areas of the country, in particular the South, these services do not even exist. Similarly, many *scuole materne* offer a quality service and are open for more than 8 hours a day, while others are only open in the morning and do not offer meals.
- Parallel systems of *scuole materne/scuole dell'infanzia*, run by the State, local authorities and private organisations, without a comprehensive strategy covering all schools: for example, there are no guidelines defining standards of quality for the entire system; education guidelines adopted by the Ministry of Education apply only to State-run schools and schools run by local authorities or private organisations can decide whether or not to adopt these guidelines. In State-run schools, the Ministry of Education provides teachers, while local authorities are responsible for non-teaching staff, buildings, meals and transport. But paradoxically, the national government considers *scuole dell'infanzia*

run by local authorities to be private schools, and they receive only token support from the State, as do schools run by private organisations.

- The reform of secondary education: this has been discussed for 30 years, but without securing the agreement needed to raise compulsory school age to 16 (compulsory schooling currently ends at 14) and to redefine the basic training for teachers and other workers in services for young children.
- The competences and responsibilities of different levels of government: there is a need to define the role of national government as setting guidelines and standards and promoting coordination, while regional governments and local authorities should have responsibility for planning, management and control of services.
- The lack of consistency in what families pay for services: today a family with a 2 year old child attending an *asilo nido* pay on average LIT 300,000 a month; when the child is 3 and goes to a *scuola materna*, the parents then pay only for meals; in primary school, books are free, but in secondary school (up to 14 years) they cost on average LIT 600,000 a year.

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These examples illustrate how policies in Italy are characterised by much contradiction and ambivalence; above all, there is no coherent framework. Moreover, even when there are good laws, there is no guarantee that they are applied. While there are a number of significant local initiatives concerning services for young children, both public and private, the problem is the dissemination of these local experiences, establishing links between similar initiatives and their incorporation into projects and laws for implementation throughout the country. To make this sort of progress, political stability is absolutely necessary; otherwise even the mere collection and dissemination of information and experience is a problem involving much wasted energy and resources. Further reasons for the failure to exploit local initiatives are the inadequate coordination by central government and the marked division between the culture found within services for young children and the culture within the political system.

The political, institutional and financial crisis facing Italy makes it difficult to implement strategies for reform - except in the most pressing cases, such as social security reform - and public debate therefore has moved to other subjects and priorities. Moreover children and women continue to occupy a relatively weak political position - although the falling birth rate has raised new interest albeit often marked by contradictions and ambiguity. Awareness of the need for actions to reconcile employment and family responsibilities has also grown, although it is still usually viewed as a problem for women, rather than involving men, the economic system and society as a whole. While the need for policies supporting families is today accepted by all political parties, there is no overall and coherent framework that would integrate services for children, leave arrangements, tax policies and flexibility in work organisations.

Glossary

Services

a. Asilo nido: centre for children aged 3-36 months, usually open on a full-day, all year basis.
b. Nido part-time: centre, similar to an *asilo nido,* but only open in the morning. Not very common
c. Scuola Materna/Scuola dell'Infanzia: pre-primary schooling for children aged 3-6 years. State-run schools must be open at least 8 hours a day and may be open as long as 10 hours; but schools run by local authorities and private organisations are often open for similar hours or longer.
d. Nuova Tipologia/Servizio Integrativo: centre for children aged 0-3 years or 0-6 years and their main everyday carers, offering flexible and diversified opening hours and opportunities for part-time care, play and socialisation. Other names for this new type of service include **Centro Gioco, Spazio Bambini, Area Bambini.**
e. Scuola Elementare a Tempo Pieno: school for children of compulsory school age open 8 hours a day, including lunch.
f. Servizio Extra-scolastico: service providing care and recreation for school-age children, either school-based or separate from school. Not very common.
g. Centro Estivo: service for children aged 3-14 years during the summer holidays, offering a variety of activities.

Workers in services

Educatrice/ore di Asilo Nido: works in *asilo nido, nido part-time, nuova tipologia.* Three to five years, post-14 training. This term is defined and used in national labour contracts.
Puericultrice/Vigilatrice/Assistente all'infanzia: different terminologies found in different regional laws and national statistics instead of *educatrice/ore di asilo nido.* A *puericultrice*, however, has only a one year, post-14 training; the number of workers with this qualification is decreaing.
Insegnante di Scuola Materna: works in *scuola materna/scuola dell'infanzia.* Three to four years post-14 training; a 1990 law establishes a degree course, but has not yet beem implemented.
Insegnante di Sostegno: works in *scuola materna/scuola dell'infanzia,* alongside *insegnante di scuola materna* providing specialist support for children with disabilities and other special needs. Same training as *insegnante*, but usually with additional two year course.
Animatrice/ore: works mostly in *servizi extra-scolatici* and *centri estivi.* Usually has a high school diploma.
Ausiliaria/o: works in *asilo nido, nido part-time, nuova tipologia* and in *scuola dell'infanzia* run by local authorities, with responsibility for cleaning and other maintenance work, but may also help with the children at specific times. No basic training beyond compulsory schooling. An auxiliary cleaning/ maintenance worker in a State-run *scuola materna* who does not help with the children is called a **bidella/o;** while a cook is called a **cuoca/o.**
Coordinatrice/ore pedagogica/o: works at local authority level with staff in *asili nido* or *scuole dell'infanzia* providing support, in particular the planning and organisation of continuous training and making links with other services (eg.libraries, health services, museums), universities and research. Has a University degree, usually in Psychology or Pedagogy.
Direttrice/ore didattica/o: works with teachers in State-run *scuole materne*, with educational and management responsibilities. Has a university degree, usually in Pedagogy.

Staffing standards and the regulation of private non-subsidised services

There are no national standards on staffing for services in the welfare system. For publicly-funded *asili nido*, national standards for staffing are defined both by the national labour agreements which specify that there should be 1 adult for 6 children under 3 years and regional laws. Regional laws also specify acceptable qualifications, in addition to three qualifications which national legislation specifies are acceptable for work in nurseries. These national qualifications involve 1 to 3 year post-14 courses, but some regions specify qualifications requiring a five year post-14 training.

Staff:child ratios in *scuole materne/scuole dell'infanzia* are usually 2 teachers and 1 assistant for every class of 25-28 children; these ratios are specified for state-run schools and usually also applied in local authority school.

There is no regulation of private non-subsidised services.

It

Costs and funding

Publicly-funded services are funded in two different ways. For services for children under 3 years, public funding comes mainly from local authorities, with some assistance from regional governments. Parents contribute to costs, taking account of family income and numbers of children; levels of contribution vary between local authorities, from 10% to 20% of total costs, but averaged 12% in 1990.

In the education system, pre-primary schooling run by the State and local authorities is funded by the national Ministry of Education and local authorities, with some contributions from regional governments; parents make no payments except for meals and transport. Private *scuole materne* receive small amounts of funding from the Ministry of Educations, regional governments and local authorities; parents pay fees.

There is no system of tax reduction or cash grants to parents to subsidise the costs of using services.

Levels of provision and how children are cared for while parents are at work

Levels of provision

The most recent national statistics were published in 1994 and refer to 1991.

Publicly-funded services for children aged 0-3 years: in 1991 there were 91,655 places in publicly-funded services, 6% of the age group. These places were all in *asilo nido*. The number of children using these places was 95,145, indicating that some children attended on a part-time basis and that some local authorities register more children than there are places available due to the frequent absence of children of this age. Overall, the number of places in publicly-funded services increased by 2% between 1986 and 1991.

Publicly-funded services for children aged 3-compulsory school age (6 years): in 1991, there were 1,538,778 children in this age group in pre-primary schooling, 91% of the age group. The number of children attending school decreased by 5% between 1986 and 1991, due to the decrease in the child population. Because the child population fell more than the number of children attending, the proportion of the age group attending increased from 87% .

Publicly-funded services providing care and recreation for school-age services: there is no information on places or children attending.

Privately funded services: there is no information.

How children are cared for while parents are at work

There is no precise information on the subject. But based on a study carried out in 1986-7 in 14 regions by the Institute of Psychology of the National Research Council (CNR), estimates can be made about the arrangements made for children aged 0-3 years while their mothers were at work.

On this basis, for children under 3 years, the most common arrangement was a relative (nearly always grandparents), accounting for nearly half of all children (48%), followed by the mother herself (for example, where the mother works at home)(27%) and a paid carer coming into the child's own home (15%). Nurseries accounted for 8% of children, fathers and family day care 2% each.

LUXEMBOURG

The system

Compulsory schooling starts at the age of 4 years. **Publicly-funded services for children under 4 years** are provided in the **welfare system**, where they are the responsibility of the Ministry of the Family at national level. Most publicly-funded provision is in centres [see glossary - (a)(b)(c)(d)(e)]. There is also a small amount of organised family day care. Most services are available on a full-day, all year basis, but *garderies* provide occasional part-time care.

Most publicly-funded services are provided by private organisations (who usually make agreements with the Ministry of the Family to fund their centres), but some provision is made by local authorities.

Within the **education system**, pre-primary schooling is provided for children aged 4 and 5 years; attendance is compulsory. It is available during term-time and for the same hours as primary school, and is usually located in primary schools [see glossary - (f)].

Lx

Primary school hours are from 08.00 to 16.00, with a two hour lunch break; schools are closed on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons. A few local authorities, with the support of the Ministry of the Family, are experimenting with new models, providing meals and care during the midday break. the Ministry of Education has responsibility for the education system at national level; local authorities are responsible locally, providing schools.

Publicly-funded services providing care and recreation for school-age children are provided in centres which are usually independent of schools and most of which also take younger children not attending school [see glossary - (c)(e)(g)].

Private non-subsidised services are mainly provided by family day carers [see glossary - (h)], but there are also some private centres. These services are indirectly subsidised through tax relief for parents costs (see **Costs and Funding** box).

Objectives and key concepts

The *foyers de jour* are not primarily intended to provide for working parents or other particular groups; on the contrary, as part of a coherent social policy, they are meant to be equally accessible to all parents. Their objective is to provide care in an environment that is warm, safe and caring, yet also exciting and stimulating. High priority is placed on the pedagogical content, to improve the quality of children's life by supporting their development. Great emphasis is placed on children's free play.

The main objectives of *l'enseignement préscolaire* are to promote children's cognitive and social development and prepare them for learning, in response to the requirements of primary education.

Main developments since 1990

1. Since 1990, there has been considerable development of services throughout the country, including the North which was formerly considered to have fewer services. The Ministry of the Family has played an important role in this development. It has made an increasing number of agreements to fund new services (*foyers de jour conventionnés);* while since 1992, it has also subsidised a number of private centres which have not made these agreements with the Ministry (*foyers de jour non conventionnés*). Emphasis has been placed on developing *foyers de jour porte ouverte*, especially in more under-privileged areas. This type of provision plays an important social role; it offers an opportunity for inter-cultural work and the integration of different ethnic groups.

In 1992, the Ministry of the Family produced a National Plan, whose objectives are to improve the quantity and quality of services, for example through better regional distribution of services, including more provision in rural areas, and enabling services to better meet the needs of children. More specific objectives of the Plan include encouraging, through increased government financial support, public and private employers who want to set up centres for the children of their employees, and increasing public funding for other services, including *foyers de jour* and *foyers de jour porte ouverte*.

2. Since 1991, all State-run centres have been sufficiently well equipped to cope with children with special needs. In November 1994, there were 34 children with special needs in publicly-funded *foyers de jour*. Centres admitting children with special needs receive extra funding to employ additional staff. Children with special needs can be admitted immediately, even if there is a long waiting-list.

3. In 1990, a general information centre (*service d'orientation - info-crèches)* was established in Luxembourg City. This provides parents with a wide range of information about services for young children, including opening times, staff training, quality and vacancies. Since 1990, a system of organised family day care has begun to be developed for children with special needs placed by social workers, as part of a wider resource which also includes foster care services (*placement familial).*

4. The compulsory school age was reduced from 5 to 4 years in 1992.

Assessment of the current situation (by Jean Altmann)

Policies for children and their parents are increasingly part of political discussion. Over the last 5 years, there has been a large increase in services for young children in Luxembourg, with the Ministry of the Family widening the availability of services through additional funding, and local authorities offering surplus buildings to providers of services. This expansion has ensured better distribution of services and the development of *foyers de jour porte ouverte*.

In spite of these developments and the stated intention of the Luxembourg Government to offer places at affordable prices to locally based and high quality services, significant gaps still remain.

Problems remain for children and their parents, especially for women who want to enter the labour market or to improve their skills by taking training and who cannot find adequate services for their children.

Public expenditure must be used with the aim of making the most of limited resources. As the Government emphasises in its National Action Plan, local authorities have their part to play. There should be a duty on local authorities to act as development agencies so that an infrastructure is created; for example, they could allow private sector providers to use surplus premises at favourable rates, so reducing the cost of starting centres. Flexibility and diversity of services can only develop if there is a local working partnership between the public sector and private organisations.

Funding proposals should not help only one category of family. The needs of employed parents, for example, should not be prioritised above those of other parents and their children who need services for other reasons than employment. If we accept the educational and social arguments, then services should be available for everyone.

There is still a frequent mismatch between what services offer and what consumers need. All providers and potential providers should regard the views of their consumers as an essential part of the planning process. There should be ways of gauging demand, researching the needs of consumers and consulting with consumers when new services are being planned.

Finally, the status of *tagesmütter* should be legalised and regulated if we are to cope with the existing large number of unregulated family day carers.

Glossary

Services

a. Crèche: centre for children aged 0-36 months, usually open on a full-day, all year basis.
b. Jardin d'enfants: centre for children aged 2-3 years, open throughout the year for at least 4 hours a day and usually for 10-11 hours a day.
c. Centre d'enfants: centre for children aged 4-12 years, usually open on a full-day, all year basis.
d. Garderie: a centre for children aged 2-10 years, where children can be left for a few hours.
e. Foyer de Jour (Conventionné/non-conventionné): general term for a centre (ie. a-d above). Centres that are funded by the Ministry of the Family, as the result of an agreement, are called *conventionnés*; other centres are called *non-conventionnés*.
f. Enseignement préscolaire: pre-primary schooling for children aged 4 and 5 years, open during term-time from 08.00 to 16.00 but usually closed on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons.
g. Foyer de jour porte ouverte: centre providing care and recreation for children aged 6-12 years, separate from schoool, available outside school hours and during school holidays. Mainly intended for children from socially and economically disadvantaged families.
h. Tagesmutter: family day carer either employed in organised family day care or as a self-employed family day carer. For children aged 0-3 years on full-day basis and older children when not at school.

Workers in services

Éducateur gradué: works in *foyers de jour*. Three years post-18 training.
Éducateur: works in *foyers de jour*. Three years post-16 training.
Instituteur de l'enseignement préscolaire: works in *enseignement préscolaire*. Three years, post-18 training.
Tagesmutter: family day carer. No training required.

Staffing standards and the regulation of private non-subsidised services

There are no national standards on staffing for services in the welfare system. Staff:child ratios in centres within the welfare system which have agreements with the Ministry of the Family, are 1 adult for 5 children who are not yet walking and 1 adult for 8 older children. All staff must be qualified either as *éducateurs* or *éducateurs gradués*. In organised family day care there should be no more than 3 children per family day carer at any one time.

In *enseignement préscolaire*, the Ministry of Education recommends 1 *instituteur* for 14-18 children, but this recommendation is not always followed by local authorities. Especially in larger local authorities, there may be classes of 18-22 children. An *instituteur* is often supplemented by an assistant.

There is no regulation of private non-subsidised services.

Costs and funding

The two systems of publicly-funded services are funded differently. In the welfare system, public funding comes from the Ministry of the Family, for centres with which it makes an agreement, or local authorities. Parents contribute to costs; those attending centres funded by the Ministry, pay according to a common formula which takes account of family income and numbers of children.

In the education system, pre-primary schooling is funded by the national Ministry of Education and local authorities. Parents make no payments.

Tax relief is available for children under 14 years to subsidise parents' payments for publicly-funded services or for private non-subsidised services.

Levels of provision and how children are cared for while parents are at work

Levels of provision

Publicly-funded services: There are no statistics for the number of places in publicly-funded services in the welfare system. Information is available on the number of places in centres with which the Ministry of the Family has an agreement (*foyers de jour conventionnés*), but not for other subsidised services, whether they are centres run by private organisations or local authorities or organised family day care. Moreover, the official statistics for *foyers de jour conventionnés* are organised into places for children aged 0-2, 2-4 and over 4 years: in 1993, there were 892 places available in this type of provision, 13% for children aged 0-2 years, 49% for children aged 2-4 years and 38% for school-age children. So even for this type of service, it is not possible to say how many places are available for children under and over 3 years.

Between 1988 and 1993, the number of places in *foyers de jour conventionnés* grew by 39%.

All children aged 4 and 5 attend pre-primary schooling on a compulosry basis.

Private services: there is no information on the number of places or children attending at private, non-subsidised services. However, in 1993 58% of places in centres, excluding *garderies*, were non-subsidised, provided by non-profit private organisations (8%), private proprietors or commercial companies (27%) and workplaces for their employees (25%).

How children are cared for while parents are at work

There is no information available.

NETHERLANDS

The system

Compulsory schooling starts at the age of 5 years. There are two systems of **publicly-funded services for children under 5** - welfare and education.

Within the **welfare system**, services are the responsibility of the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport at national level, with local authorities responsible at local level. There are several types of centre [see glossary - (a)(b)(c)(d)]; these centres are generally available throughout the year and may be open on a part-time basis (at least 5 hours a day) or a full-day basis (at least 9 hours), but *peuterspeelzalen* are usually open only during term-time and children generally attend them for only a few hours per week. In addition, there are local publicly-funded offices which help to organise the relationship between family day carers and parents wanting to use this service, but which do not employ family day carers [see glossary - (g)(m)]. All of these publicly-funded services are managed by private organisations.

Within the **education system**, children aged 4 years can be admitted early to primary school, that is before compulsory schooling begins.

Primary school hours are generally 09.00 to 16.00 with a two hour lunch break, with schools closed on Wednesday afternoons; however, increasing numbers of schools offer a continuous timetable with a shorter day and a shorter midday break. Most children now have the option to stay at school during the lunch break and about 30% of children do so. Schools must offer a minimum of 22 hours teaching a week for children aged 4-8 years and 25 hours for older children. Schools are managed by local authorities and private organisations and are the responsibility of the national Ministry of Education [see glossary - (j)(l)].

Publicly-funded services providing care and recreation for school-age children are provided in centres which are independent of schools and some of which also take younger children not attending school [see glossary - (a)(k)]. These publicly-funded services are managed by private organisations.

Private non-subsidised services are mainly provided by family day carers and persons who come into the child's own home [see glossary - (m)]. There are also some private centres, run by companies for their staff or by parents or run as small businesses [see glossary - (b)(e)(f)]. These services are indirectly subsidised through tax relief for parents costs (see **Costs and Funding** box).

Objectives and key concepts

In general, the main objective of all services for young children outside the education system (excluding *peuterspeelzalen)* is to offer a service to working parents. A related, but secondary, objective is to offer children a safe, healthy and specially designed environment, to promote full development of their abilities. There is a debate about whether centres offer care and education,

or just care required by their 'clients' who are assumed to be parents and employers. There are few concepts influencing the work, although some centres are influenced by the work of Steiner, Montessori, Freinet etc. The most important approach is intercultural, including bilingualism, an ethnically mixed group of workers, attention paid to different traditions, values etc.

Concepts in *peuterspeelzalen* have always been 'child-centred', and some adopted special approaches to their work with children (eg. interculturalism, Steiner, Montessori etc). But now, the main objective of *peuterspeelzalen* is changing. Their original function was general provision of play, socialisation, development of skills and (sometimes) preparation for school; now, an increasing emphasis is placed on additional functions, for example assisting children with various disabilities or from 'situations of need' (ie.children from disadvantaged areas) to get a better start at school.

The objective of *basisschool* is the development of children, intellectually, emotionally and creatively, and the acquisition of essential knowledge and social, cultural and physical skills, taking account of the fact that children are growing up in a multi-cultural society.

Ne

Main developments since 1990

1. During the period, the Stimulative Measure programme has been operating, channelling money from central government to encourage the provision of new services in the welfare system. Begun in 1990 and running through to the end of 1995, the Stimulative Measure has been intended primarily to expand the number of services for working parents, with employers expected to supplement public funds by buying places for their employees; during the period, employers have become important co-funders of services. In 1996, after the end of the Stimulative Measure, central government funds will be distributed to local authorities as part of their block grant and without earmarking for particular services.

2. The Stimulative Measure has encouraged services for young children to be viewed as a labour market measure, to meet labour supply needs. Expansion of services has increasingly relied on labour market measures, such as employers buying places, the crea of new jobs in centres for long-term unemployed people and providing special training for minority ethnic women. Childcare is mentioned as an employer responsibility in more than 200 collective agreements and, in the long run, the objective is that 70% of all places should be funded by employers and parents and only 30% by local authorities and parents.

3. Expansion of services has been accompanied by a process of decentralisation, deregulation and privatisation of all types of services in the welfare system, which in turn has led to the development of a more business-oriented approach and culture. Services have to compete to attract 'clients' from businesses (to get employer subsidies), and all types of offers are made, including flexible hours, evening and even night-time care and care for sick children at home; services also have to compete on price. A new language has been invented to indicate this new culture; objectives such as access to services and equal opportunities have been replaced by selectivity for those who can afford it or have an employer willing to buy a place in a service.

4. At the same time, the provision of services for young children is no longer on the political agenda; it has been replaced by the issue of more equal sharing of family responsibilities and employment between men and women and between employees, employers and trades unions.

5. Tax relief has been re-introduced for parents' costs in using services that are not publicly subsidised. In 1996, new tax measures for employers who subsidise places for their employees will be introduced, to replace grants that they previously got through the Stimulative Measure.

6. In 1996, a central regulation setting minimum standards for quality will be introduced for a five year period.

Assessment of current situation (by Liesbeth Pot)

There are three particularly positive features of the situation in the Netherlands. First, in recent years, services for young children are no longer discussed only by some experts, a few politicians and feminists. There is now much more public interest and support, partly as a result of services expanding and partly as a result of growing public awareness that good services are an important means for achieving equal opportunities. Second, the expansion of places resulting from the Stimulative Measure has created more opportunities for children. Third, the rather late development of services in the Netherlands has coincided with a national and international debate on the redistribution of paid and unpaid work between men and women, with particular emphasis on more time for caring from fathers; this coincidence might have positive effects on the development of a more equal sharing of care between parents and might also influence the culture in labour organisations.

On the negative side, there has been an increasing emphasis on joint funding, involving employers. This introduces an uncertain element into the future of services, as they become closely linked to fluctuations in the labour market and labour demand. In a situation of high unemployment, where employers have more choice, they may prefer to recruit employees without children or restrict funding of services to specific groups of employees; this last strategy is already becoming apparent, with the risk of increasing inequalities and the emergence of an 'elite' service. Developments in recent years, while increasing provision, have also reduced accessibility for certain groups; the proportion of children in services from low income families, lone parent families and ethnic minority groups has fallen. Equal access to services is undermined as the costs grow for those parents who do not have a job or an employer ready to part fund a place in a service. The underlying problem is that the Stimulative Measure is almost exclusively concerned with labour market participation of women, and is not intended to promote social participation of children; in this sense, it lacks balance.

The need to expand services rapidly (which was the aim of the Stimulative Measure), a change to a market approach to providing services (marked by a more business-oriented approach), large-scale re-organisation of services and the integration of autonomous centres into larger organisations have worked against the development of more conceptual and qualitative work; the emphasis has been on quantity rather than quality. However the issue of quality has remained a

strong undercurrent in services for young children - and the time seems ripe for development of this issue. Centres are beginning to draw up pedagogical policy plans and to define the rights of parents. In my view, the processes of discussing and defining quality are more important than the results, because they require workers in the services to discuss and define what values and norms they hold and how they view the functions of services both for parents and children.

Dutch mothers not only usually work part-time; they also use part-time services for their children. A new norm is developing - 3 days a week in a centre is the maximum period compatible with 'good parenting'. Women in dual earner households are very busy: they combine children, employment and household tasks, all on a part-time basis, and although ideally they would like to share these with their partners, in practice this is still far from achieved. They have had to find a balance between these tasks, a balance which in my view reflects the continuing predominance of the ideology of motherhood.

Ne

Glossary

Services

a. Kinderdagverblijf: centre for children aged 2 months to 4 years, sometimes up to 6, 8 or 13 years, usually open on a full-day, all year basis.

b. Bedrijfscrèche: as *kinderdagverblijf*, but provided only for employees and very few provide for school-age children. A *kinderdagverblijf* only for students is called a *universiteitscrèche*.

c. Halvedagverblijf: centre for children aged 2 months-4 years, usually open throughout the year for a maximum of 5 hours a day.

d. Peuterspeelzaal: centre for children aged 2 and 3 years, usually open during term-time for a maximum of 4 hours a day; offering 6-7 hours per week of play for each child attending. Some centres are accommodated in a school building or are otherwise attached to a school; others are part of a community centre. [NB. similar to *playgroup* in Ireland and United Kingdom].

e. Oudercrèche: centre for children aged 2 months-4 years, usually open on a full-day, all year basis. Its distinguishing feature is that it is managed by parents who also work with the children, sometimes with paid qualified workers.

f. Particuliere crèche/crèche aan huis: centre for children aged 2 months-4 years, usually open on a full-day, all year basis. Its distinguishing feature is that it is either run as a small company or by an individual providing care for a small group of children in her own house.

g. Gastouderbureau: office which helps to organise the relationship between *gastouders* and parents wanting to use their services; offering advise, support, training, placement and administrative services but, generally, not employing *gastouders*. Usually open throughout the year during office hours.

h. Oppascentrale: organisation or office helping to arrange individual care at home, usually when parents have an evening out.

j. Basisschool: school for children aged 4-12 years, open during term-time for about 5.5 hours (excluding breaks).

k. (Centrum voor) buitenschoolse opvang: centre, separate from school, providing care and recreation for school-age children, available outside school hours and during school holidays.

l. Tussen-de-middag-opvang: school-based service for school-age children, where they can eat their lunch; usually open during term-time for 4 days a week.

m. Gastouder: self-employed family day carer working with *gastouderbureau*. For children aged 0-12 years on full-day basis and for school-aged children when not at school. A *particuliere gastouder* works independent of a *gastouderbureau*.

Glossary (continued)

Workers in services

(Groeps) leidster: works in a *kinderdagverblijf* or other type of centre. Two years post-18 training or two to three years post-16 training. Students who have not finished their courses may be employed as *junior-leidsters*.

Hoofd: head of a *kinderdagverblijf* or other type of centre. Four years post-18 training; for larger centres, an extra year of management training is required. *An assistent-hoofd* is the deputy to the head, with same training as *leidster*, with extra year of management training for a larger centre.

Directrice/directeur: head of a larger organisation of centres and other types of services. At least four years post-18 training, plus further training in management or a University degree in Psychology, Pedagogy or management.

Peuterspeelzaalleidster (peuterleidster): works in a *peuterspeelzaal*. Generally has two or three years post-16 training, but many workers have acquired skills in practice. A *hoofdleidster* is the head of a *peuterspeelzaal*. A *peuterwerkster* works in a community-based *peuterspeelzaal*, after a two to three years post-16 training.

Vrijwilliger: unpaid and/or untrained volunteer worker in centres.

Technisch en huishoudelijk personeel: covers various kinds of auxiliary staff (cleaners, cooks, handymen) working in centres. Administrative workers are called *administratief personeel*.

Leerkracht basisschool: works in *basisschool*. Four years post-18 training in teacher training college.

Gastouder: family day carer. No training required.

Ne

Staffing standards and the regulation of private non-subsidised services

There are no national standards on staffing for services in the welfare system. The Association of Dutch Municipalities recommends 2 adults per group of 8 children under 12 months, 2 adults for 10 children aged 12-24 months, 2 adults for 12 children aged 24-36 months and 2 adults for 16 children aged 36-48 months. All staff must have a qualification or be training.

There are also no national standards for *gastouders* working with *gastouderbureau*, but it is recommended that there should be no more than 4 children per *gastouder*, including her own.

The recommendation for staff:child ratios for services providing care and recreation for school-aged children (ie.4 years and older) is 2 adults per group of 18 children, but only 1 of the 2 *(groeps)leidsters* needs to be qualified.

There is no regulation of private non-subsidised services at national level; some local authorities regulate services, others do not.

Costs and funding

The two systems of publicly-funded services are funded differently. In the welfare system (including centres for children under 4, *gastouderbureau* and services providing care and recreation for school age children, but excluding *peuterspeelzalen*), public funding comes from the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport (via a special programme - the Stimulative Measure) and local authorities. In most centres, public funding accounts for less than half of total costs. From 1996, when the Stimulative Measure programme ends, financial responsibility for services will be entirely decentralised to local authorities; the Ministry of Health will no longer play a funding role.

The remaining money for centres comes from employers, who buy places for their employees in centres, and parents. Parents contribute to costs, on the basis of a formula produced by the Ministry of Health which takes account of family income so that payments take an increasing proportion of family income as income increases (ranging from 6% to 20%); however this formula is only advisory and local authorities may use different formulas.

Most *peuterspeelzalen* get some public support but the level is very variable and usually less than half the costs. Parents contribute to costs, but only a third of *peuterspeelzalen* take account of family income in deciding what parents pay.

In the education system, early admission to primary school is funded by the national Ministry of Education. Parents make no payments.

Tax relief is available to subsidise parents' payments for using non-subsidised centres and *gastouders* arranged through *gastouderbureau*.

Levels of provision and how children are cared for while parents are at work

Levels of provision

Statistics on levels of provision for services in the welfare system are collected by three different organisations (CBS - *Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek; RvB - Research voor Beleid; SGBO - Social Geografisch Bureau voor Onderzoek)*. They use different definitions of places and get their data from different sources.

RvB provides the most comprehensive data, according to which in 1993 there were 94,000 children aged 0 - 4 years in centres - 12% of the age group. There were a further 14,000 children aged 4 - 13 years attending centres providing care and recreation for school-age children, 1% of the age group. Most of these places receive some public funding, but the statistics do not distinguish these places from places that are completely privately funded.

Because some children attended part-time, the actual number of places (76,200) was considerably fewer than the number of children attending (108,000). The figures for places for different age groups given below are based on the assumption that the ratio between places and children attending is the same for all age groups.

RvB statistics do not include *peuterspeelzen*, nearly all of which receive some public funding. For this form of provision, *CBS* statistics are the only available source. In 1993, there were 85,400 places in playgroups used by 197,500 children aged 2 and 3 years, about half of the age group.

None of the organisations collecting statistics distinguishes between places for children under and over 3; because children start school at 4, statistics are organised into children under and over 4. Since it is likely that coverage rates increase with children's age, places in services for children aged 0-4 have been split on the assumption that two-thirds of places are for children aged 0-3 and one-third for children over 3.

It should be emphasised that the figures given below are only estimates, based on the assumptions outlined above.

Publicly-funded services for children aged 0-3 years: in 1993, there were an estimated 62,605 children in centres, excluding *peuterspeelzen*; they occupied an estimated 44,136 places, equivalent to about 8% of the age group.

Publicly-funded services for children aged 3-compulsory school age (5 years): nearly all children aged 4 years attend primary school but on a voluntary basis (as compulsory schooling does not begin until 5 years); this means that about half of the 3-5 years age group are in school. In addition, there were an estimated 31,305 3 year olds in centres in the welfare system, occupying an estimated 22,070 places, equivalent to 6% of the 3-5 age group. This suggests that there were places for about 56% of the age group.

Publicly-funded services providing care and recreation for school-age children: about 1% of the 4-13 age group attend these services.

RvB statistics do not permit comparisons over time; they were only collected first in 1991. As a result of the Stimulative Measure there has been a substantial increase in provision since 1988. For example, statistics collected by CBS show 22,360 places for children aged 0-13 years in centres in 1988 and 58,100 places in 1993, an increase of 160%

Privately funded services: there is no information.

How children are cared for while parents are at work

The data given below were produced by *CBS*. The information refers to households with a child under 4 years, where the mother is employed and refer to care arrangements when mothers are at work. It does not distinguish between mothers employed full-time and part-time (particularly relevant given the high level of part-time employment in the Netherlands and the short hours worked by many mothers with part-time jobs).

The most common arrangements was 'no care' (39%), which included care by a child's father or by the mother herself, for example if working at home. This was followed by centre care (31%), divided equally between *peuterspeelzalen* and other centres; workplace centres accounted for 4% of children altogether. A fifth of children were looked after by individual carers, either in the carer's home or in the child's home; these categories included relatives and friends as well as paid carers such as *gastouders*. Finally, there was a category for where a combination of more than one type of care was used, which accounted for 11% of children.

AUSTRIA

Based on a national report by Günter Denk, Austrian Institute for Family Research

The system

Austria has a federal constitution, with 9 states or *bundesländer,* which are partly responsible for developing and implementing legislation and policy on services for young children.

Compulsory schooling starts at the age of 6 years. **Publicly-funded services for children under 6 years** are provided in the **welfare system** and are the responsibility of the same department: the Ministry of Family Affairs at Federal level and Departments of Youth and Family Welfare in the *bundesländer*. Although there are common features between services for children under and over 3, there is not a fully integrated system.

As well as some organised family day care, there are several types of centre. Some centres are for children under 3 years [see glossary - (a)]; over 70% are located in Wien. The most common centres are for children aged 3-6 years [see glossary - (b)]. There are also some examples of age-integrated centres [see glossary - (c)(g)], while *krippen* are usually affiliated with *kindergartens*.

Krippen and just over half of all *kindergartens* are open on a full-day basis; the remaining *kindergartens* are open only in the morning or for two half day sessions. Opening hours of *kindergartens* vary between *bundesländer*. The proportion with full-day opening hours varies from 93% in Wien to 5% in Tyrol and Voralberg; while the proportion open only in the morning varies from less than 1% in Lower Austria to 81% in Styria.

Although children may attend *kindergartens* from the age of 3 years, some *bundesländer* give preference to *kindergarten* provision for children from the age of 4, supporting family day care and other services for very young children [eg. see glossary - (i)] and offering payments to parents (nearly always mothers) who take extended Parental Leave.

Publicly-funded services may be managed by private non-profit organisations, but most are managed by local authorities (74% in the care of *kindergartens).*

As there is only one entry to school each year, some 6 year olds are not at school. In Wien and some smaller towns, these children attend pre-primary schooling [see glossary - (d)]. Elsewhere they remain in *kindergarten*.

School hours are from 08.00 to 12.00 or 13.00, usually from Monday to Friday although some schools are open on Saturdays. Generally, schools do not provide lunch for children, although a few schools offer lunch and care for children outside school hours [see glossary - (f)]. Schools are the responsibility of the Federal Ministry of Education and education departments in the *bundesländer*.

Publicly-funded services providing care and recreation for school-age children are mainly

provided in centres, separate from schools, some of which are age-integrated [see glossary - (e)(g)]. They may be managed by local authorities or private, non profit organisations. There are some schools which also include a service providing care and recreation [see glossary - (f)].

Private non-subsidised services are mainly provided by family day carers [see glossary - (j)] or other individual carers.

Objectives and key concepts

Krippen used to be regarded as mainly providing physical care, but new pedagogical principles place greater emphasis on the social development and needs of the children. The main objective of the *kindergarten* is to prepare children for school and to help children start school with equal chances. The pedagogical principles contained in the legislation of some *bundesländer* emphasises mainly educational objectives for morning sessions, encouraging creativity and social skills, whereas afternoon sessions, often with smaller groups of children, give more attention to emotional and recreational needs.

Main developments since 1990

1. During the last decade there has been a considerable increase in both the quantity and variety of services for young children. New types of service, for example family day care and parent-managed centres, have been developing rapidly.

2. Family day care has been increasing rapidly over the past 5 years. It is increasingly regarded as the most appropriate service for very young children with employed parents; recent research has also concluded that self-employed *tagesmütter* offer the cheapest service. Although there are no national statistics, it is estimated that in 1995 there were 3,000 *tagesmütter*, providing for more than 6,000 children

3. In recent years there has been a considerable increase in the number of *elterninitiativen*, and now there are more than 300, with more than 3,000 children. These services have been established by parents for a variety of reasons, for example because existing services do not meet the needs of employed parents or have long waiting lists or because a group of parents want to implement particular pedagogical principles. Compared to more traditional services, such as *krippen* and *kindergartens*, these services usually emphasise alternative pedagogics, smaller groups of children (10-12 on average), self-management and opening hours tailored to parents' needs. Therefore, they are considered to be able to meet the needs of parents and children in a more flexible way than the more traditional services.

These parent-managed services receive public funding from various sources, including the Federal Government, local authorities and regional employment services. The level of public funding varies between *bundesländer*. They usually cost less to run than more traditional services, as long as public authorities do not place too many conditions on them, and in some *bundesländer*, there are no conditions.

Assessment of the current situation (by Günter Denk)

The issue of an alleged shortfall of 200-300,000 places in services for young children has received increasing attention in public discussions. It is argued that many women are unable to get employment because they cannot find a suitable place for their children while they are at work. It can be assumed that demand for services is reduced for children under 2 years by Parental Leave and met for children from 4 years by *kindergartens*. As results from research projects show, it is therefore children aged 2 and 3 years who are least provided for by publicly-funded services.

However, the arguments for 200,000 extra places seem to be exaggerated. They are not based on research results and do not reflect the real demands and needs of parents with young children. Moreover, it is doubtful if providing additional provision is the only solution to the needs of young children themselves. Based on previous experience, creating 200,000 extra places would be very costly, and there would also be major problems in finding sufficient buildings and staff.

The success of family policy should not depend on providing more places in traditional services for young children. The main political objective should be to improve the living conditions of parents by increasing their freedom of choice in how they care for their children. The aim of increasing choice for parents suggests several initiatives, especially for parents with children aged 2-3 years: for example, more part-time employment, more flexible working hours, sharing jobs and housework, encouraging more parent-run services and more family day care and a longer period of Parental Leave (which is already found in some *bundesländer*).

Os

Finally, the question needs to be asked whether the political discussion about the demand for services has placed too much emphasis on the interests of the parents, ignoring the needs and welfare of the children.

Glossary

Services

a. Krippe: centre for children aged 0-36 months, usually open on a full-day, all year basis. They are generally affiliated with *kindergartens*, ie. they are managed by the same body and are located in the same premises.
b. Kindergarten: centre for children aged 3-6 years. May be open on a full-day basis (***Ganztagskindergarten)***, or for two sessions per day with a 2 hour lunch break when parents are expected to take children home (06.30 or 07.00 to 12.00 or 12.30 and from 14.00 to 17.00 or 18); or for a 4-5 hour morning session only (07.00 to 12.00) (***Halbtagskindergarten***). Usually open at least 10 months a year. Some *kindergartens* have mixed age groups, which also include school-age children in the afternoons; these groups are known as ***familiengruppen.***
c. Elterninitiativen/Selbstorganisierte Kindergruppen: centre that is usually parent-initiated and managed, mainly for children from 1-6 years, but also takes school-age children. Opening hours according to parents' needs and preferences, varying from 10 or less to 40 hours a week.
d. Vorschulklassen: pre-primary schooling for 6 year olds, not yet ready for admission to primary school.
e. Hort: centre for school-age children, usually separate from school, and open from 11.00 to 17.00 or 18.00. As well as lunch, care and recreation, these services provide supervision for children doing their homework.
f. Tagesheimschule: school offering lunch, supervision of homework and care and recreation services for children during midday break between school sessions or at the end of the school day.
g. Kinderhäuser/ Tagesheimzentrum: age-integrated centre for children aged 0-14 years, with children grouped according to age, usually open on a full-day, all year basis.
h. Eltern-Kind-Zentren: centre combining various activities, including parent support and services for young children.
i. Kinderspielgruppen: group for children under 3-4 years, meeting 2-3 times a week for 2-3 hours. Mothers need not be present, but one aim is to provide parent support.
j. Tagesmutter: family day carer, self-employed or employed by private non-profit organisation, mostly for children under 4.

Workers in services

Kindergartenpädagogin: works in *krippen, kindergartens* and *horte.* Five years, post-15 training.
Kindergartenhelferin: assistant who works in *krippen, kindergartens* and *horte.* No special training.
Tagesmutter: family day carer. No training required.

Staffing standards and the regulation of private non-subsidised services

There are no national standards on staff:child ratios for services in the welfare system. Standards are determined by each *bundesländer* and consequently can vary, although in practice staff:child ratios do not vary much. The average group size in 1993/94, over the whole country, was 14 in *krippen;* 23 in *kindergartens*; and 21 in *horte.* In most cases, groups for children under and over 3 years must have at least 2 adults, one of whom is qualified (*kindergartenpädagogin*).

In 1994/95, there was, on average over the whole country, 1 **qualified** adult for 11.2. children in *krippen;* 1 to 19 in *kindergartens*; and 1 to 21.6 in *horte.* The overall adult: child ratio, including qualified and unqualified staff was 1:6.7 for children under 3 years in *krippen;* 1:11.9 for children aged 3-6 years in *kindergarten*; and 1: 15.5 for school-age children in *horte.*

Generally, private family day carers need to be approved by public authorities. They may take up to 7 children, including their own, depending on housing conditions.

Costs and Funding

Public funding of services for young children comes mainly from *bundesländer* and local authorities. Family day care and parent-initiated centres also receive subsidies from the Federal Government and regional employment agencies. With one exception, parents contribute to costs; in calculating contributions some services take account of family income and whether siblings attend the service (for example, in publicly managed *kindergartens* in Wien). The level of contribution varies between *bundesländer*, local authorities and individual services. Parents also pay more in privately managed *kindergartens*, even if the service receives a public subsidy. The exception is the state of *Niederösterreich*, where *kindergartens* are free of charge to parents, although parental contributions were under discussion in early 1996.

Levels of provision and how children are cared for while parents are at work

Levels of provision

Publicly-funded services for children aged 0-3 years: in 1994/95, there were 7,260 children attending publicly-funded *krippen* (about 3% of the age group). The number of publicly-funded places has increased by 25% since 1988. At the same time, it was estimated that there were 6,000 children attending family day care, both publicly and privately funded.

Publicly-funded services for children aged 3-compulsory school age (6 years): in 1994/95, there were 205,831 children attending publicly-funded *kindergarten* (about 75% of the age group). The attendance rate increases with age, with virtually 100% attendance for 5 year olds and 70-80% attendance for 4 year olds; the lowest attendance is for 3 year olds, but varies from about 20% in Tyrol and Voralberg to about 60% in Wien. The number of publicly-funded places has increased by 13% since 1988.

Data for 1994 show that for children under 2 years, more than 80% have a parent on Parental Leave, while around 3% attend a publicly-funded service. For children aged 2 and 3 years, about 20% attend publicly-funded services, while for children aged 4 or 5 years, more than 80% attend publicly-funded services.

Publicly-funded services providing care and recreation for school-age children: in 1994/95, there were 28,525 children attending publicly-funded services, including about 6% of all children aged 6-10 years. The number of publicly-funded places has increased by 24% since 1988.

How children are cared for while parents are at work

There is no recent information on this subject.

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PORTUGAL

The system

Compulsory schooling starts at the age of 6 years. There are two systems of **publicly-funded services for children under 6 years** - welfare and education. These two systems overlap for children aged 3-6 years.

Within the **welfare system,** services are the responsibility of the Ministry of Solidarity (formerly the Ministry of Employment and Social Security) at national level. There are several types of centre [see glossary - (a)(b)(c)] and organised family day care [see glossary - (d)] These services are available on a full-day, all year basis. Publicly-funded services within the welfare system are mainly and increasingly managed by private organisations (*Instituição Particular de Solidariedade Social - IPSS)*, but some are managed by local authorities and Regional Social Security Centres (*Centros Regionais de Segurança Social - CRSSs).*

Within the **education system**, pre-primary schooling is provided for children from 3 years to compulsory school age. This service is the responsibility of the national Ministry of Education. Pre-primary schooling is available during term-time and for the same hours as primary school [see glossary - (e)].

School hours are from 09.00 to 15.00, with a one hour lunch break. Most schools do not provide lunch or care for children at lunch-time. Where this service is provided, it is financed by local authorities and parent associations.

Publicly-funded services providing care and education for school-age children are mainly provided in centres. They operate in the welfare system. A few share accommodation with schools, but normally they are separate from schools and share accommodation with centres for younger children. Management of these services is similar to that for services for younger children; most are managed by *IPSSs,* although a growing number are managed by local authorities or parent associations [see glossary - (f)]

Private non-subsidised services are mostly provided by family day carers [see glossary - (g)] although there are some private centres.

Objectives and key concepts

The main objective of *creches* is to provide care for children with working parents in an environment of physical safety and emotional well-being; there is also a concern with the child's overall development, as well as for early detection and treatment of handicaps. Activities with the children have an educational aim, although they are developed spontaneously according to the situation. *Jardim de Infância* and *educação pré-escolar*, although operating in different systems (welfare and education respectively), share as an objective the overall and balanced development of the child, as well as detection of handicaps. However, whereas the former service is concerned with the needs of children and their families, including the provision of care for

children while parents are at work, the latter service is concerned exclusively with the needs of the children. Centres in the welfare system therefore have more varied and complex tasks to perform, which may sometimes make it harder to develop an educational approach to work with the children.

CATLs for school-age children also provide safe care for children while their parents are employed, and while attendance is open to all children, priority is given to children of employed parents. Their main objective is the development of children's autonomy, for example by encouraging initiative, critical ability and a sense of responsibility. Children can choose freely from a variety of activities (including music, art, dance, sports, libraries) that enable them to discover new interests and to realise their potential. Workers act as 'animators' rather than leaders.

Main developments since 1990

1. In recent years, *IPSSs* have become increasingly important as service providers. A 1992 regulation introduced changes in the relationship between *IPSSs* and public authorities, including the introduction of stronger conditions in cooperation agreements between *CRSSs* and *IPSSs* which provide *IPSSs* with public funding for their services, and the establishment of regional committees to support and evaluate cooperation.

Po

2. The Ministry of Education launched two experimental programmes of pre-primary schooling, one to provide activities for children in 12 disadvantaged areas of Lisbon and Porto; the other to provide educational activities for children living in rural areas, through the use of peripatetic teachers.

3. In the late 1980s, the Government set a target for 1995 of provision (in the welfare or education systems) for 50% of 3 and 4 year olds and 90% of 5 year olds. The planning of this expansion was delegated to a Commission consisting of representatives from the Ministries of Education and of Employment, *IPSSs* and private for-profit services. This Commission put forward its plan in 1992, but it has not been implemented. Indeed, while the number of places in welfare system services for 3-6 year olds increased by 15% between 1988 and 1994, in 1992 the number of places in the education system actually suffered a slight fall. From 1989, the Ministry of Education took a unilateral decision not to create new teaching posts, while a few services were actually closed due to inadequate number of children.

4. The Government has now made a proposal for the development of pre-primary schooling for 3-6 year olds; the objective is to end inequalities in access to pre-primary schooling and great importance has been attached to this measure, which is considered to be of great strategic importance. The means of expansion is via 'contract programmes' (*contratos programa)*, through which the Ministry of Education will allocate an annual sum for each new classroom opened for 20-25 children aged 3-6 years; the sum is meant to cover the employment of an *educador de infância* and an assistant. Funding can be used to support services set up by local authorities, private organisations, businesses and for-profit providers. These *contratos programa* are also

intended to encourage the employment of unemployed *educadores de infância* and school teachers.

This proposal has met strong opposition, including from the Teachers Union which accused the Government of wanting to develop services at the expense of quality and transfer responsibility to third parties. The proposal has also been criticised for not taking account of the needs of working parents. The government has responded that education authorities should concentrate on educational tasks and should not be concerned about the provision of care; and that the proposal also envisages an inter-ministerial committee, with representatives from the Ministries of Education and Employment, one of whose objectives will be to consider ways to make services more responsive to the needs of parents.

4. In the middle of this controversy, the National Education Council (a consultative body consisting of educational experts) published an important report on the situation of pre-primary schooling in Portugal, in particular in comparison to other Member States. The report included proposals for the development of services, within a fundamentally educational framework but without losing sight of the need to provide support to employed parents. It recommended that the State should encourage the creation of education centres for 3-6 year olds, which would integrate education and care, as well as social support for disadvantaged areas. This would bring closer together the two existing systems of services, strengthening the educational element in welfare system services and extending the opening hours in pre-primary schooling.

5. After the elections in October 1995, the new Portuguese Government has identified pre-primary schooling, along with basic education, as one of its priorities.

Assessment of the current situation (by Teresa Penha)

Portugal has the highest proportion of full-time employed mothers in the EU, yet average earnings are the lowest. The growing urban crisis, including housing problems, forces many young couples to look for housing further and further from their work, leading to long and difficult journeys. All this makes the life of young parents difficult. Everyday, our young children are away from their parents for periods that are far too long; when a baby has to be in a centre or with a family day carer for 10-12 hours, it is an unhappy situation for the baby as well as for the parents, however good the quality of care. Parents often have strong feelings of guilt and can easily become distanced from their children's education. Parents are often accused of not being available enough for their children, but this not due to lack of love, but poor social organisation.

Despite these growing problems, in recent years there has been no coherent policy to help parents reconcile employment and family responsibilities. In the Portuguese situation, such a policy requires flexibility of work, paid Parental Leave - and an increase in the number of services for young children. Even in this last area, of services, there is no coherent policy; we are left with two systems - welfare and education - providing services for 3-6 year olds.

In recent years there has been some increase in services, with the fastest growth occurring in services for school-age children. But this growth has come about entirely within the welfare system of services, promoted and funded through the Ministry of Employment and Social Security and *CRSSs*. In the education system, there has been no growth in services for 3-6 year olds. The Ministry of Employment has suggested that the Ministry of Education should take over responsibility for *jardins de infância*. In the meantime, the Ministry of Employment no longer encourages the promotion of these services for 3-6 year olds.

The problem is the absence of clearly defined policies for both sectors - welfare and education. The Ministry of Employment, which is concerned with the needs of working parents, gives priority to *creches* and *CATLs*. While the Ministry of Education has not agreed to provide additional funding to enable pre-primary schooling to be more responsive to the needs of working parents because it does not feel responsible for the care component of services.

Po

Glossary

Services

a. Creche: centre for children aged 3-36 months, open on a full-day, all year basis
b. Jardim de Infância: centre for children aged 3-6 years open on a full-day, all year basis
c. Centro infantil: age-integrated centre for children aged 0-3 years and 3-6 years or 3-6 years and 6+ years or 0-6+ years, open on a full-day, all year basis.
d. Creche Familiar: organised family day care for children aged 3-36 months, of between 12 and 20 family day carers. Supervised by 1 worker for every 12-20 family day carers.
e. Jardim de infância de rede pública: pre-primary schooling for children aged 3-6 years, open during term-time from 09.00 to 12.00 and from 13.30 to 15.30. Some schools have facilities for lunch and supervision during the midday break.
f. Centro de Actividades de Tempos Livres (CATL): centre providing care and recreation for school-age children from 6 years upwards, available outside school hours and during school holidays. Often share accommodation with services for younger children in a *centro infantil*.
g. Ama: family day carer either employed in *creche familiar* or as self-employed family day carer. Required to take a 1-2 months initial training as a condition of approval by public authorities.

Workers in services

Educador de Infância: works in *creche* and *creche familiar*, and in *jardim de infância* (both welfare and education system services). Three years post-18 training.
Pessoal Auxiliar do Técnico (Vigilante ou Ajudante): works in *creche* or *jardim de infância* in welfare system, as assistant to *educador*. No specific basic training; training varies.
Auxiliar Educativo: works in *jardim de infância* in education system, as assistant to *educador*. No specific basic training; training varies.
Director Técnico: person in charge of any type of service. Trained as *educador* or as a medical nurse (*enfermeira de saúde pública*).
Animador (de Tempos Livres): works in *CATLs*. Three years post-18 training (as *educador de infância*, school teacher or other psycho-pedagogical training) with further training in group work etc.

Staffing standards and the regulation of private non-subsidised services

Staff:child ratios in services within the welfare system are 1 adult for 5/6 children not yet walking; 1 adult for 8/10 older children under 3 years; 2 adults for 15 3 year olds; 2 adults for 25 children aged 3-6 years; and 2 adults for 20 children for school-age children in *CATLs*. The officer in charge of a centre for children under 6 should be an *educadora de infância* or a medical nurse, and a pedagogically trained worker, usually an *educadora de infância*, should be with each group of children, together with an assistant (*pessoal auxiliar do técnico*). In *CATLs*, the officer in charge should be an *animador de tempos livres*, as should other staff working in these centres.

In a *creche familiar* there should be no more than 4 children per *ama* at any one time (or 3 children if one has a handicap). The supervisor should preferably be an *educadora de infância*.

Staff:child ratios in pre-primary schooling are 1.5 adults for a group of 15 3 year olds or a group of 25 children aged 3-6 years. One of the adults should be an *educadora de infância*.

Private non-subsidised services, including centres and family day care, must meet certain conditions to operate.

Costs and funding

The two systems of publicly-funded services are funded differently. In the welfare system, including *CATLs* for school-age children, public funding comes from national Government and is managed by *CRSSs*. Parents contribute to costs. There is a national formula for services managed by *CRSSs*, but *IPSSs* can apply their own formulas; generally, parental payments are related to family income and numbers of children. Parents using services managed by *IPSSs* pay more than for services managed by *CRSSs*.

In the education system, pre-primary schooling is largely funded by the Ministry of Education, with a small contribution from local authorities. Parents make no payments.

There is no system of tax reduction or cash grants to parents to subsidise the costs of using services.

Levels of provision and how children are cared for while parents are at work

Levels of provision

Publicly-funded services for children aged 0-3 years: in 1993, there were 38,772 places in publicly-funded services, equivalent to 12% of the age group; these places were used by 36,381 children (implying over 2,000 vacancies). Ninety per cent of the places were in *creches*; the rest in *creche familiar*. Overall, the number of places increased by 31% between 1988-1993; places in *creches* increased 25%, but places in *creche familiar* increased by 130%.

Publicly-funded services for children aged 3-compulsory school age (6 years): in 1993, there were 154,891 places in publicly-funded services, equivalent to 48% of the age group. Just over half the places (54%) were in *jardins de infância* in the welfare system, the rest were in *jcrdins de infância* in the education system. The places in the welfare system were used by 78,573 children. Overall, the number of places increased by 7% between 1988 and 1993; however, during this period the welfare system services increased by 15% places, while education system places fell by 1%.

Publicly-funded services providing care and education for school-age children: in 1993, there were 69,678 places in *CATLs* in the welfare system, equivalent to 10% of the 6 - 10 years age group; these places were used by 62,807 children. The number of places increased by 45% between 1988-93.

Privately funded services: there is no information on the extent of these services, except for services for children aged 3-5 years, which provided for 8% of the age group in 1994.

How children are cared for while parents are at work

There is no information.

FINLAND

Based on a national report by Marjaliisa Kauppinen
National Research and Development Centre for Welfare and Health

The system

Compulsory schooling starts in the year when children will be 7. **Publicly-funded services for children under 7 years** are mainly provided within the social **welfare system**. At national level, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health has responsibility for policy and the National Research and Development Centre for Welfare and Health has responsibility for developing services, with local authorities responsible at local level. Provision is made in centres [see glossary - (a)] and in various forms of organised family day care [see glossary - (b)(c)(d)].

Pre-primary schooling [see glossary - (e)] is mostly provided for 6 year olds in *päiväkoti* in the social welfare system, but also sometimes in schools in the **education system**. Children attend school-based *esiopetus* for 18-20 hours a week; *esiopetus* in *päiväkoti* is integrated into the programme of full-day groups.

School hours increase as children get older, from 19-21 hours a week in the first two years, to 23-25 hours in the next two years. All children have a free hot lunch at school. At national level, the Ministry of Education has responsibility for policy and the National Board of Education has responsibility for developing services. Local authorities responsible locally, providing schools

Publicly-funded services providing care and recreation for school-age children are mainly provided within the social welfare system in *päiväkoti,* family day care, schools or in separate centres. There are also services in school premises, operating within the education system, providing various recreational activities, but not care.

Local authorities manage most services, but can also buy services from privately managed centres. Only 5% of publicly-funded services involve local authorities buying private services.

Private, non-subsidised services are not common, and consist mainly of family day carers.

Objectives and key concepts

Historically, the Finnish system of services for young children has had two roles: to meet the needs of working parents and to meet the developmental and other needs of children. Legislation requires that services should be organised to offer a good place for a child's upbringing and provide continuous care during the day when it is required. The aim of services for young children is to support families with children in fulfilling their responsibilities for upbringing and, with the family, to promote balanced development of the child. By offering continuous, secure and warm human relationships, with varied activities, services should support and promote the child's upbringing and development - intellectual, social, emotional, physical, aesthetic, ethical and religious - and help them to become responsible and peaceful adults, with a respect for the environment. The law requires that local authorities provide services in the child's own language

- Finnish, Swedish or Lapp.

Emphasis is placed on children's individuality and their different backgrounds; services must familiarize themselves with children's backgrounds and with the needs of children and their families. Emphasis is also placed on collaboration between the home and the service, based on their joint responsibility for the child. Parents' needs must be taken into consideration in planning and developing activities. As well as meetings between parents and staff, other kinds of mutual activities are arranged.

Attention is also paid to the requirements of children with special needs. In most cases, they are integrated into ordinary groups. Depending on their needs, special support is organised to ensure their development; the number of children at the centre may be reduced or extra staff employed or children with special needs may have their own personal workers accompanying them to their centre. In some cases, a part of a centre may be reorganised to provide a special group for these children.

The basis for family day care is the home - its atmosphere, flexibility and individuality.

Main developments since 1990

1. In recent years, there has been substantial delegation of powers from central government to local authorities. This process includes services for young children, giving local authorities increased autonomy in how to develop services and implement their duties; for example, national regulations specifying the size of groups in centres have been removed.

Su

2. Since 1990, legislation guarantees parents the right to choose the form of care for a child **under three,** either in a publicly-funded service or at home or in a private service, by means of a 'home care allowance' (see **Costs and Funding** box). This means that every child under three has the right to a place in a publicly-funded service.

3. The rapid growth of unemployment (18% in 1995) and cuts in public expenditure in the early 1990s led to rapid changes in quality and quantity in services. Between 1992 and 1994, the need for services decreased by 16%, while the number of places decreased 15%. As a result of increased unemployment, there is no longer a shortage of places (although this may now be changed as the economy improves again). Overall, the trend is towards full-day provision in centres, with a drop in the number of family day care places. Services most at risk in the present economic difficulties include services providing care and recreation for school-age children and playgrounds (*leikkitoiminta*).

4. From the beginning of 1996, the right to a publicly-funded place will be extended to all children under school age, while the right to choose between a place and financial support will be extended to 3 year old children. Local authorities have accepted the challenge of this legislation very seriously, despite their financial problems; projects are being prepared to develop services. But rather than increase the number of places, mostly the aim is greater flexibility and

reducing the distinctions between centres and different forms of family day care. Many local authorities are developing *ryhmäperhehoito*, where 2 or 3 family day carers work together, as this is considered to be a flexible way of meeting the changing needs for services. There are also plans to develop cooperative centres, a few of which already operate.

5. In 1995, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health began an experiment in funding services, called the 'service subsidy'. This gives parents the right to choose a place in a private service, which subsequently receives economic support from its local authority provided the service meets standards laid down by the local authority. The aim is a controlled introduction of a 'market-oriented' approach into services for young children. Another aim is to evaluate this experiment before introducing widespread restructuring of the system.

6. The system of pre-primary schooling, *esiopetus*, is also being further developed, with priority being given to 6 year olds cared for at home or in family day care; the target is to increase provision by 1,000 places a year in schools. The objective is to develop closer links between services in the social welfare system for children below school age and the school system; draft guidelines for this reform have already been prepared.

7. From 1/8/95, the training of *lastentarhanopettaja* will be to degree level, in University; previously, training was done in specialised colleges or special units in Universities.

Glossary

Services

a. Päiväkoti: centre for children aged 0-7 years, and sometimes older (ie. providing care and recreation for school-age children), open on a full-day, all year basis; there are some 24 hour centres, for children of parents working shifts. Centres usually offer part-time and full-time provision and generally have places for 30-50 children.
b. Perhepäivähoito: organised family day care. For children aged 0-7 years and school-age children. Supervised by 1 worker for a maximum of 30 family day carers in an organised scheme.
c. Kolmiperhehoito: individual carer employed by a local authority who cares for children from 2-4 families in the children's own homes, alternating between the homes of the families.
d. Ryhmäperhehoito: a group of family day carers, usually 2 but sometimes 3, employed by the local authority which also provides premises.
e. Esiopetus: pre-primary schooling for 6 year olds, either in a *päiväkoti* or a school.
f. Avoin päiväkoti: 'open' centre attended by children in full-time parental care or family day care, providing opportunities for children to play and socialise and support for their carers.
g. Leikkitoiminta: playgrounds offering inside and outside activities; the service has staff who organise some activities, but young children must be accompanied by carers.

Workers in Services

Lastentarhanopettaja: kindergarten teacher who works in *päiväkoti*, supervises organised family day care and sometimes teaches in *esiopetus* (mainly in *päiväkoti*, but sometimes in school). Three years, post-18 university training.
Sosiaalikasvattaja: social pedagog who does similar work to a *lastentarhanopettaja*. Three and a half years post-18 college training (from 1.1.96).
Päivähoitaja: mostly works in *päiväkoti* with *lastentarhanopettaja*. Two and a half years post-16 training.
Perhepäivähoitaja: family day carer, usually employed by a local authority in an organised scheme, but may also be self-employed. Family day carers employed by local authorities must, as a minimum, attend a 250 hours basic training course.
Perhepäivähoidonohjaaja: supervisor of family day care. Usually a *lastentarhanopettaja* or has a college level social welfare degree.

Su

Staffing standards and the regulation of private non-subsidised services

In centres for children receiving full-day care, there should be 1 trained adult (ie. a *lastentarhanopettaja* or *sosiaalikasvattaja or päivähoitaja*) for 4 children under 3 years, and 1 trained adult for 7 children over 3 years. Each group should have at least one *lastentarhanopettaja.* In centres providing part-time care, the ratio is 1 trained adult for 13 children.

In a *avoin päiväkoti,* there are no staffing standards, but usually there are two trained workers plus auxiliary staff.

A family day carer can have a maximum of 4 children under school-age, including her own, with a fifth school-age child attending part-time; family day carers working in a *ryhmäperhehoito* or as a *kolmiperhehoito* may also only care for a maximum of 4 children under school age.

Private services should be approved and supervised by local authorities.

Costs and funding

The integrated, welfare-based system of services has a common system of funding for publicly-funded services for children aged 0 - 7 years. Public funding comes from local authorities and the national government, which subsidises on average 41% of expenditure by local authorities. Parents contribute to the cost according to family income and number of children. In 1995, parental fees varied from nothing to FIM 1,430 per month, and averaged 15% of the running costs.

For pre-primary schooling in *päiväkoti,* parents contribute to costs on the same basis as other services in the welfare system. However, pre-primary schooling in schools is free of charge.

After the end of Parental Leave, a family is entitled to a home care allowance until their child is 3 and if the child does not attend a publicly-funded service; the allowance may be used to support a parent caring for a child at home or to pay for private services (an option that is seldom used). The allowance consists of a basic flat-rate payment (FIM 1980 a month in 1995), with supplements if the family has two or more children under 7 who are not in publicly-funded services and if the family has a low income; some local authorities pay a supplementary allowance. Parents with a child under 3 who use their entitlement to work reduced hours can receive a reduced home care allowance; few parents take advantage of this option because of the low level of the reduced allowance.

Levels of provision and how children are cared for while parents are at work

Levels of provision

Parental Leave lasts about 11 months, and is used by almost all families, mostly by mothers; parents taking leave are paid a parents' allowance of 45-66% of income. This is followed by Child Care Leave until children are three, with a 'home care allowance' (see **Costs and Funding** box). Nearly half of families use the Child Care Leave, but only a minority (15%) take the full leave period; the average length of leave taken is 12 months. At the beginning of 1994, 213,680 children had parents receiving 'parents' allowance' or 'home care allowance'. At the same time, 178,978 children were in publicly-funded services, of whom 168,847 were under school age. This means that 86% of children under school age were either in publicly-funded services or in families where parents were on leave and receiving an allowance.

Publicly-funded services for children aged 0-3 years: in 1994, there were 40,000 children attending services, 21% of the age group. A little more than half (53%) attended centres, the rest family day care.

Publicly-funded services for children aged 3-compulsory school age (7 years): in 1994, there were 106,200 children attending services in the welfare system, 43% of the age group. Nearly two-thirds (64%) attended centres, the rest family day care. In addition, 55% of children aged 6 received pre-primary schooling, most children (94%) in *päivakoti*, with the rest in school.

Overall, it is estimated that there was a net over-supply of places of 4,300 places in the country.

The number of children in publicly-funded places for children aged 0-6 years (excluding those in pre-primary schooling in schools) decreased by 18,000, or 9%, between 1988 and 1993; the coverage rate fell from 43% of children aged 0-6 to 39%. Attendance at centres increased by 12% but attendance in organised family day care fell by 34%; the proportion of children in family day care decreased from 46% to 35%

In addition, in 1993, there were 52 *avoin päivakoti*, open to home-based carers and children, attended daily by over 1,000 children.

Publicly-funded services providing care and education for school-age children: in 1994, there were 10,131 children attending services, 5% of the 7-10 years age group.

Private, non-subsidised services: it is estimated that 30-40,000 children attend private services funded by their parents.

How children are cared for while parents are at work

At the beginning of 1994, nearly half of all children under compulsory school age (48%) had a parent receiving a benefit payment while taking leave, 37% attended publicly-funded services and 15% either went to private services or were cared for at home by a parent not on leave and receiving a benefit payment.

Because the system of services in the social welfare system has been developed specifically to support parents employed outside the home, most children attending publicly-funded services do so on a full-time basis - in 1993, 75% of children attending centres and 81% of children in family day care.

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SWEDEN

Based on a national report by Gunni Kärrby,
Department of Education and Educational Research, Göteburg University

The system

Compulsory schooling currently starts at the age of 7 years, although children may start school at 6 if their parents wish and if there is provision. From 1997, local authorities must provide school places for all 6 year olds whose parents want them to attend. **Publicly-funded services for children under 7 years** are mainly provided within the **welfare system**. At national level, the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs has responsibility for policy and the National Board of Health and Welfare has responsibility for administration.

Provision is made in centres [see glossary - (a)(b)] and in organised family day care [see glossary - (c)]. These services are mainly available on a full-day, all year basis, except for some centres which offer a part-time and term-time service [see glossary - (b)]. There are also some open centres specifically for both individual carers and the children they care for [see glossary - (g)].

In some local authorities, pre-primary schooling [see glossary - (d)] is provided for 6 year olds, mostly in schools, but sometimes in *daghem.* Children attend for about 15 hours a week.

School hours are from 08.00 to 14.00, with the number of lessons varying from 13-19 hours a week in the first three years; all children have a hot lunch at school. At national level, the Ministry of Education has responsibility for education policy and the National Agency for Education has responsibility for administration.

Publicly-funded services providing care and recreation for school-aged children are mainly provided in centres. Most of these centres are separate from school [see glossary - (e)], but an increasing number of centres are school-based and integrate their activities for part of the day with primary schools [see glossary - (f)].

Local authorities are responsible at local level for services for children under 7 and for services providing care and recreation for school-age children and for schools. In most local authorities, the responsibility for all of these services is integrated within one department.

Most services are managed by local authorities, although services managed privately may be subsidised by local authorities. In 1993, local authorities managed 88% of centres for children under 7 and providing care and recreation for school-aged children.

Private, non-subsidised services are not common and consist mainly of family day carers.

Objectives and key concepts

Legislation defines the responsibility of local authorities as "*to ensure that children and young people grow up in good and secure conditions and act in close cooperation with families to*

promote the overall personal development and favourable physical and social development of children and young people".

The general aim of services for children below school age is "*to give children ample and comprehensive opportunity to develop their emotional and intellectual potential and become open and considerate individuals, capable of empathy and cooperation with others, of learning to seek knowledge for themselves and of forming their own opinion*".

More specifically, services are based on the following principles: services must complement the home and cooperation with parents is important; children learn all the time and in every context, and caring is therefore also an important part of the general educational approach; educational practice must be based on children's own experiences and previous knowledge; services must give children a general introduction to natural history, culture and society and give them an opportunity of understanding the wholeness and inter-relatedness of existence; and group play is important for children's learning and social development. A thematic working approach is used, with children encouraged to explore and learn more about a particular subject in many different ways.

In the 1970s and 1980s, centres moved away from grouping children by age to so-called 'sibling groups' of mixed age children up to 6 years or older. In the past few years, some centres have moved back to age grouping; today, about half of the *daghem* have 'sibling groups' (1-3 year olds or 3-6 year olds), while the others have more narrow age groupings.

Sv

Legislation in 1995 gives all parents who are employed or studying the right to a place in a publicly-funded service for children from 1 to 12 years. For children under 1 year (most of whom are at home with parents who are taking Parental Leave), it is for each local authority to decide if they will offer provision. In addition, legislation also gives children with disabilities or other special needs the right to a place in a service; in most cases they are integrated into ordinary groups of children. Children who do not have special needs and do not have an employed/studying parent have no right to a place in a service providing non-parental care; however they can attend *öppen förskola* with a parent

In recent years Sweden has become a multi-cultural society, in which more than 140 languages are spoken; 12% of children in services for young children are from an ethnic minority and do not speak Swedish at home. Children in school are entitled to support in their home language. Although this is not a right in services for young children, many local authorities do offer this support, for example through the employment of bi-lingual staff.

Main developments since 1990

1. A law passed in 1995 requires all local authorities "*to provide preschool and school-age care in different forms for children aged 1 to 12 years to the extent it is needed by parents due to employment or studying or because of the needs of the child*"; the law also requires a place to be provided within a reasonable time. Most local authorities have already met this requirement,

while many others expect to reach this goal during 1995. Over the last 20 years there has been a rapid increase in services, with the number of places in *daghem* growing from 32,000 in 1975 to 313,000 in 1993; even in 1994, the number of children attending services provided by local authorities increased by 35,000. At the same time, places in organised family day care have fallen as centre-based provision for children under and over 6 years has increased. There is still estimated to be a shortage of 60,000 places, mainly due to the high birth rate in the last 5-10 years.

The new legislation includes a section on quality. Staff must have sufficient training and experience to meet the educational and care needs of the children; and the size and composition of groups should be suitable, taking account of the age, special needs and other features of the children and the training and experience of the staff. It is for local authorities to interpret these conditions.

2. At the same time, economic difficulties have led many local authorities to reduce standards in their services, in particular to increase group sizes and reduce staffing levels. For example, whereas groups in centres for children aged 1 - 6 years used to be 12-15 children, they now vary considerably and most have more than 15 children; similarly, in centres providing care and recreation for school-age children, group size used to be 15-20, but now can vary from 20 to 40 children. Fees paid by parents have also increased (up 15% from 1993) and a number of centres have shortened their opening hours.

3. The basis of central government funding has changed. Instead of being given to local authorities as an 'earmarked' subsidy, specifically for services for young children, it is now given as one lump of money, intended to cover the full range of welfare system services; services for young children, therefore, may find themselves in competition with other services for a share of the money, which may lead to growing differences in provision between local authorities. This change followed from a 1990 reform giving more autonomy to local authorities. Since then, there has also been a trend towards local authorities integrating responsibility for schools, services for young children and other children's services.

4. Since the beginning of the 1990s, there has been substantial development of private but publicly-funded services, mainly managed by parent cooperatives, but also by non-profit organisations, companies and others; they now provide about 10% of places. This has increased the choice of some parents, although given a continuing shortage of places, the choice in reality is often limited.

5. A law passed in 1993 allows children to start school at 6 years, if their parents want them to and if provision is available. Since then, there has been a growth in pre-primary schooling for 6 year olds (*sexårsverksamhet*), mostly based in schools. In these classes, *förskollärare* and school teachers work together. There is great variation between classes in structure, content, working methods etc. In some schools, 6 year olds are in separate groups (although spending some time with older children), while in other schools they are integrated with the first and

sometimes second grades in primary school. As this type of provision increases, so there is a fall in the number of *deltidsgrupp*.

6. As well as more 6 year olds attending schools, there has been an increasing trend to integrate centres providing care and recreation for school-age children into schools, with close working relationships between teachers and *fritidspedagog*. The issues raised by trying to combine two traditions is a subject for research and evaluation.

7. The length of the academic component in the training of both *förskollärare* and *fritidspedagog* increased from 2½ to 3 years in 1993.

8. Looking ahead, a recent report from the national organisation for local authorities *(Kommunförbundet)* suggests a future scenario for the development of services, taking into account changes in employment, the family and values and in the relationship between employment and family life. The report suggests that over the next 25 years, the demand for publicly-funded services will remain at about the same level - but the type of service demanded will become more differentiated. Three types of provision, each with different staffing and cost implications, will emerge: services providing care but without educational goals; educational services, offering structured activities at set times; and services offering temporary provision on special occasions.

Assessment of the current situation (by Gunni Kärrby) Sv

Sweden is known for having a well developed public system of services for young children, highly subsidised and with a high level of availability and affordability. It is internationally recognised as having a high level of quality. Professional standards are generally high. Due to these and other conditions, Swedish parents have high expectations of services.

The economic recession has led to a shortage of money in all local authorities and cuts in the welfare system. Parental fees have increased for all types of services, and differences between local authorities in the cost of services to parents have widened. This development has particularly affected low income families with young children. The cuts in public resources have led to parents and staff being worried, and sometimes protesting, about a lowering in quality in services. Recent research shows that the level of educational quality varies considerably between centres. Research also shows that parents today place high value on quality. This increased awareness among parents and their increased choice of services may have a significant influence on the professional development of staff.

In spite of the emphasis in national guidelines on cooperation between parents and staff in services for young children, parents are usually not very involved in the services. This is a problem as more parents today come from different cultures and may have norms and values about child rearing that are different from those traditionally found in Swedish society. A closer relationship between family life and services is seen as a future aim in the development of services, and may be one of the reasons for the rapid development of parent cooperatives.

Glossary

Services

a. Daghem: centre for children aged 0-7 years, open on a full-day, all year basis. Usually 50-60 children.
b. Deltidsgrupp: centre open on part-time, term-time basis for 4-7 year olds, although 85% of children attending are 6 year olds. Usually offers a morning and afternoon session for separate groups of children, with about 20 children per session.
c. Familjedaghem: organised family day care for children aged 0-7 years, open on a full-day, all year basis.
d. Sexårsverksamhet:: pre-primary schooling for 6 year olds, sometimes in *daghem*, but usually in school where it may be organised in a separate class or integrated into the main school. Available about 15 hours a week in term-time.
e. Fritidshem: centre providing care and recreation for school-age children up to 12 years, separate from school and open on full-day, all year basis.
f. Integrerad skola och fritidshem: care and recreation service for children aged 7-10 years integrated during school hours with school activities to offer a continuous programme in which the teachers and the staff in the care and recreation service work closely together. Open only during term-times.
g. Öppen förskola: 'open' centre attended by children in full-time parental care or family day care, providing opportunities for children to play and socialise and support for their carers. The carer must stay with the child. Open from 1 to 5 days a week, with varying hours, but on average open 15 hours a week.

Workers in services

Förskollärare: works in *daghem, deltidsgrupp, sexårsverksamhet (*with school teachers*) and oppen förskola.* Three years, pos*-18 training.
Barnskötare: works in *daghem, deltidsgrupp, sexårsverksamhet* and *öppen förskola*, as assistant to *förskollärare*. Three years, post-16 training.
Fritidspedagog: works in *fritidshem* and *integrerad skola och fritidshem*. Three years, post-18 training.
Dagbarnvårdare: family day carer, usually employed by local authority in *familjedaghem*, but may also be self-employed. Should have 90 hours of training, but most do not.

Staffing standards and the regulation of private non-subsidised services

There are no national standards on staffing for services in the welfare system. These are determined by local authorities. Staff:child ratios in *daghem* may vary from 1 adult for between 3-5 children under 3 years; and 2 to 3½ adults for a group of 18-20 children aged 3 - 7 years. In services providing care and recreation for school-age children, on average there is 1 adult for 10 children; the group size is normally 20-25.

Family day carers normally take between 4 and 8 children, and in rare cases up to 10 or 12; in these cases, most children would attend on a part-time basis. A full-time salary is usually paid to family day carers on the basis of caring for a full-time equivalent of 3 or 4 children.

In centres for children aged 1-10 years (eg. *daghem, fritidshem*), about half the staff are *förskollärare* (47%), over a third are *barnskötare* (39%) and 10% are *fritidspedagog* (mainly working in services for school-age children). Only 4% have other or no training.

The normal staffing ratio in a *deltidsgrupp* is 2 adults (1 *förskollärare* and 1 assistant) to 20 children; the staffing is similar in a *öppen förskola*.

There is no regulation of private non-subsidised services

Costs and funding

The integrated welfare-based system of services has a common system of funding for children aged 0-7 years. Public funding comes from central government and local authorities, which on average in 1993 funded 35% and 52% of costs respectively; central government money is paid to local authorities in the form of a block grant, which local authorities decide how to allocate between different services. Parental contributions are determined by local authorities, but usually take account of family income and number of children; in 1993, parental fees covered 13% of costs, but the proportion is increasing.

Provision for 6 year olds in *deltidsgrupp* and *sexårsverksamhet*, and provision in *öppen förskola* is free of charge to parents.

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Levels of provision and how children are cared for while parents are at work

Levels of provision

Many parents take leave when they have young children, so that few children start in services until their second year; at the end of 1994, there were only 155 children under 12 months in publicly-funded services compared to 3,000 in 1974. Overall, however, there has been a large increase in centre-based services since 1985. For example the proportion of children aged 1-7 years in centres increased from 28% to about 44% between 1985 and 1993 (from just under 200,000 children to over 300,000); while attendance at centres providing care and recreation for school-age children has increased from 22% of 7-10 year olds to about 31%. At the same time, attendance at organised family day care has fallen. Overall, however attendance at services has increased substantially, from 43% to 55%.

Publicly-funded services for children aged 0-3 years: in December 1994, there were 115,516 children attending services, 33% of the age group. Nearly three-quarters (73%) were in centres and just over a quarter (27%) in organised family day care.

Publicly-funded services for children aged 3-compulsory school age (7 years): in 1994, there were 267,337 children aged 3-6 years attending services, 72% of the age group. Over three-quarters (79%) were in *daghem* and other types of centre, with the remainder (22%) in organised family day care. In addition, most 6 year olds attended *daghem, deltidsgrupper* or organised family day care in the welfare system; 114,939 children aged 7-10 years attended these types of provision, most of whom would have been 6 year olds. Some 6 year olds also attended pre-primary schooling (*sexårsverksamhet*), but this service was still not very common in 1994.

In 1992, there were 1,599 *öppen förskola*, but there are no statistics on the number of children attending this type of service.

Publicly-funded services providing care and recreation for school-age children: in December 1994, 165,456 children aged 6-10 years attended *fritidshem*, centres providing care and recreation for school-age children; as most of these children would have been over 6 years, this suggests that about half of the 7-10 years age group attended these centres. A proportion of the 39,808 children aged 6-10 years attending organised family day care would also have been school-age children and attending this type of service for care and recreation outside school hours. Total attendance at services providing care and recreation by children aged 7-10 years was therefore probably around 55%.

How children are cared for while their parents are at work

The Bureau of Swedish Statistics conducts an annual Survey Child Care Needs, with a large sample of 100,000 children, covering attendance at services and unmet need for services. In 1995, 63% of children aged 3 months to 7 years received some form of non-parental care; the proportion is only 3% for children aged 3-12 months, because of Parental Leave, then it increases to 42% for 1 year olds and is between 60-75% for children aged 2-7. Most of these children (52% of all children) were in services provided by local authorities, mostly in centres (40%) rather than organised family day care (12%). The remaining 10% attended private services (5%) or were cared for informally and on an unpaid basis (6%).

Of the children receiving only parental care, 37% of all children, over half (20%) were cared for by a parent taking Parental Leave, leaving 17% of all children who were cared for by a parent who was unemployed, employed or studying (but not needing to use non-parental care) or who was a family day carer herself.

In 1994, over half (54%) of children aged 7-10 years were in services provided by local authorities, most in centres. Of the rest, a third only received parental care, 5% used private or informal services and 7% looked after themselves while their parents were at work.

UNITED KINGDOM

The system

Compulsory schooling starts at the age of 5 years (except in Northern Ireland where the age is 4). There are two systems of **publicly-funded services for children under 5 years** - welfare and education. These systems overlap for children aged 3-5 years.

In the **welfare system**, services are the responsibility of the English Department of Health and the welfare sections of the Northern Ireland, Scottish and Welsh Offices at national level, with local authorities responsible at local level (except in Northern Ireland). Within the welfare system, there are several types of centre [see glossary - (a)(c)(d)] and a small number of family day carers [see glossary - (h)]. *Local authority day nurseries, family centres* and *childminders* are generally available throughout the year and on a full-day basis, although many children only attend part-time; *playgroups* are usually open only during term-time and children generally attend them for only a few hours per week. These publicly-funded services are managed by local authorities and private organisations. In addition, public authorities pay fees for individual children to go to private *childminders, playgroups* and *day nurseries*.

Within the **education system**, pre-primary schooling is provided for children aged 3 and 4 years. This service is the responsibility of the English Department for Education and Employment and the education sections of the Northern Ireland, Scottish and Welsh Offices at national level, with local authorities responsible at local level (except in Northern Ireland). It is available during term-time and most children attend on a shift basis, for 2½ hours either in the morning or afternoon [see glossary - (e)]. In addition, children aged 4 years can be admitted early to primary school, that is before compulsory schooling begins; most of these children attend for a full school day [see glossary - (f)].

Primary school hours are generally 09.00 to 15.30, with a supervised lunch-time break; most schools provide meals.

Publicly-funded services providing care and recreation for school-age children are provided in centres which are usually attached to schools [see glossary - (g)]. Services are usually managed by private organisations.

Private non-subsidised services are provided in centres [see glossary - (b)], and by *playgroups* and family day carers. Low income employed parents using private services can have part of their costs subsidised (see **Cost and Funding** box).

Objectives and key concepts

Publicly-funded services in the welfare system are targeted on children defined by local welfare authorities as 'in need'. In England and Wales, legislation places a duty on these authorities to provide a level and range of welfare system services appropriate to these children and their families. 'Need' is defined in terms of actual or potential problems of health, development or

disability; it does not include children needing care by reason of their parents' employment, education or training. Local authorities are allowed to provide services for these children, but do not have a duty to do so; consequently, nearly all services for this group are left to private, non-subsidised services in the welfare system, which reflects a basic concept of public policy that providing care for children with employed parents is a private responsibility of parents.

The objective of pre-primary schooling is to further children's emotional, social, physical and cognitive development, complementing the learning that takes place in the home. It is not regarded as providing care for working parents. The service is potentially available and beneficial to all children, when sufficient places are available.

The objectives of *playgroups* are to provide education through play and support to parents. They emphasise the involvement of parents in all aspects of the service, including management.

Main developments since 1990

1. In the welfare system, there has been a significant increase in the number of places provided by private, non-subsidised services, combined with a decline in publicly-funded places. Financial constraints on local authorities, combined with the impact of policies placing more emphasis on targeting services on children in 'need', have affected the ability of local authorities to develop services to meet the needs of employed parents.

2. New legislation, enacted in 1989, came into force in England, Scotland and Wales in 1991. As well as placing a duty on local authorities to provide services in the welfare system for children 'in need', the legislation led to improvements in the regulation of private services for children up to 8 years (in Northern Ireland, a measure introduced in 1995 provides for the regulation of services for children up to 12 years). It also placed a duty on local authorities to review the full range of services in the welfare system in their area every 3 years. An examination of the first reviews, conducted in 1992, found that they provided a stimulus to collaboration between different local authority departments (in particular, welfare and education), but highlighted the shortfall and gaps in services.

3. The major government initiative over this period has involved support for the development of services providing care and recreation for school-age children. A programme running from 1993-96 has involved public funding, initially £45 million with a further £12.5 announced at the end of 1995. This funding has been delivered through local training and enterprise councils, rather than local authority welfare or education departments, and has been restricted to 'start up' costs. The main private organisation in this area (*Kids Club Network*) believes that the initiative has had a major impact on the development of these services and predicts that by March 1996 there will be 3,000 centres providing about 60,000 places (although the organisation has also estimated that to meet demand would require at least 25,000 centres); by the end of March 1995, 29,500 new places had been created as a result of the programme. An interim evaluation of the initiative in England noted concerns over long-term viability of many schemes and their affordability by lower income parents (since there is no public funding of

running costs).

4. In 1994 the Government introduced a child care allowance for low income parents in receipt of certain benefits to subsidise part of their costs when using private services (see **Costs and Funding** box).

5. In 1994, the Government announced an initiative to provide "*a pre-school place*" for all 4 year olds. Details of how the initiative would be implemented were announced in 1995; full implementation is scheduled for 1997. Rather than fund new services, each parent will be given a voucher worth £1,100 a year, which can be used to buy provision in a variety of approved services in the education or welfare systems. The voucher will only be sufficient to purchase a **part-time** place in a *nursery class* or *nursery school.*

6. Rural services have been the focus of increasing interest. In England, a small number of demonstration projects have been established; in Scotland, a rural childcare initiative has been established to support the development of services and identify appropriate models.

7. There has been a marked growth of interest in issues of quality. In 1990, the Government established a Committee of Enquiry into the Quality of Educational Experience offered 3 and 4 year olds. In 1992, *National Vocational Qualifications* were introduced as an award which recognises a worker's occupational competence. The new qualifications have yet to make a major impact; one problem is the difficulty in developing links between this vocational qualification and professional qualifications, such as teacher training.

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8. A growing number of local authorities have been attempting to address coordination issues at a local level (especially between welfare and education system services for young children) through the establishment of integrated early years departments and a range of committee and other structures. There are also an increasing number of early years forums, which provide a means of promoting exchange and collaboration between different public and private organisations involved with services for young children. At national level, however, Government responsibility continues to be split between Education and Welfare ministries.

Assessment of the current situation (by Brownen Cohen)

Services for young children are rarely out of the news, reflecting growing public concern over inadequate levels of provision. The government can point to a number of initiatives it has undertaken over recent years. There has also been a significant increase in the number of places provided in the private, non-subsidised sector, in particular in private day nurseries and to a lesser extent by childminders.

However, fundamental problems continue. There has been further evidence that services fall far short of those required. Most employed mothers continue to rely on a combination of part-time employment (often in the evening, at night or at the weekend) and care by partners or relatives. The split between welfare and education services diminishes the effectiveness of those services

which do exist in meeting the full range of families' needs. There is considerable geographical variation in the availability of some services, in particular between urban and rural areas. Significant improvements in the situation require not only resources but rethinking current policies and structures and reforming services so that they can more effectively meet the varied needs of families.

For over a decade, the idea of a 'national childcare strategy' has featured strongly in public discussions, and has been supported by all the major children's organisations as well as organisations such as the Equal Opportunities Commission, the Trades Union Congress and the Confederation of British Industry. A strategy of this kind has been seen as a means of addressing the unnecessary fragmentation of services and securing more effective coordination of policies covering services and other relevant areas such as employment measures, taxation and social security. Increasingly, it is being seen as a way of establishing objectives and targets for the improvement of services. Organisations consulted for this report expressed a strong sense of disappointment at the continuing absence of such a strategy; many see a need to locate the initiatives which have been taken by various public agencies within such a strategy framework.

Organisations also expressed concern over issues of affordability and accessibility of services for employed parents, resulting from the Government policy that public responsibility for providing services is limited to children 'in need'. Although Government has encouraged employers to help individual employees, an organisation which works with employers in developing services comments that employers are now less interested in directly providing services, in general preferring to limit any intervention to the provision of information; their own survey of employer-supported services, published in 1994, found minimal growth in provision as well as generally high costs for parents. Private day nursery services can range from £70 to £150 a week or more, and even after taking employer subsidies into account, the average cost to parents was still £70 a week. Indeed, concern over inadequate services for working parents has led to the establishment of an employer-led pressure group, which has played an active part in highlighting problems, and brought the main employers' organisation to comment that, whilst significant advances have been made, far more needs to be done.

Overall, therefore, while it is recognised that a number of valuable initiatives have been taken, by government at national and local levels, by social partners and other organisations, they do not add up to the 'quantum leap' forward in services that is required if children and parents in the UK are to have the access they need to affordable and high quality services.

Glossary

Services

a. Local authority day nursery: centre managed by a local authority, usually for children aged 0-5 years although some do not take very young children. Usually open on a full-day, all year basis, but many children attend on a part-time basis.

b. Day Nursery: centre managed by private organisation or individual, either on a non-profit or for-profit basis, for children aged 0-5 years although some provide only for older children (eg. 2-5 year olds). Usually open on a full-day, all year basis. Workplace nurseries are provided for the children of staff in a particular workplace.

c. Family Centre: covers a wide range of centre-based services for children from 0-5 years but mainly distinguished by working also with parents and/or local communities (eg. centres doing therapeutic work with families or focusing on community work).

d. Playgroup: centre for children aged 2-5 years, usually open during term-time for 2-5 part-time sessions a week . They operate in a variety of premises, but most share accommodation with other organisations.

e. Nursery education: pre-primary schooling for children aged 3-5 years, open during term-time for about six hours a day, but usually attended part-time (either in the morning or the afternoon). Most is provided as *nursery classes* which are part of primary schools; there are also some *nursery schools* which are independent of other schools.

f. Reception class: first year of primary school, but often attended by 4 year olds below compulsory school-age.

g. School-age childcare: care and recreation services for school-age children, which may be provided in schools or in centres separate from schools; sometimes called *Kids Clubs*.

h. Childminders: family day carers for children from 3 months upwards, nearly all self-employed.

Workers in services

Nursery nurse: works in *local authority day nursery, day nursery, family centre.* Two years post-16 training.

Teacher: works in *nursery education* and *reception class.* Three or four years post-18 degree course.

Playgroup worker/leader: works in *playgroup.*

Childminder: no basic training required, but may be required to attend short introductory course as condition of approval by public authority.

Out of school worker: works in *school-age childcare/Kids Clubs.* No formal training required, but Government recommends that senior worker in a centre should have some qualification for work with children.

See also *National Vocational Qualifications* in section on **Main developments since 1990**, point 7.

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Staffing standards and the regulation of private non-subsidised services

National standards on staff: child ratios for centres within the welfare system (publicly and privately funded) are 1 adult for 3 children under 24 months, 1 adult for 4 children aged 24-35 months and 1 adult for 8 children aged 36-59 months; at least half the staff should have some form of qualification. In family day care, there should be no more than 3 children under 5 years per family day carer at any one time, including their own.

Staff:child ratios in pre-primary schooling are 2 adults to 26 children; one of the two adults in every class is a teacher, the other a trained nursery assistant. There are no standards for children admitted early to primary school, and staff levels may be lower than for similar aged children in pre-primary schooling, for example up to 1 adult to 30 children.

Private non-subsidised services, including family day care, should be approved by public authorities. The regulation of these services is the responsibility of local authorities, and is usually undertaken by social welfare departments.

Costs and funding

The two systems of publicly-funded services are funded differently. In the welfare sector, public funding comes from local authority social welfare departments. It is left to individual local authorities to determine what parents should contribute towards the cost and there are no national guidelines; however low income parents in receipt of certain types of social assistance benefits are not required to make any contribution. It should be noted that publicly-funded services in the welfare system are not intended for children with employed parents; they are essentially a social work service for children who are defined as 'in need' and most children will come from economically disadvantaged families.

In the education system, pre-primary schooling and early admission to primary school are funded by local authority education departments. Parents make no payments.

The Government has announced that from 1996 parents will receive vouchers which they can use to pay for part of the costs of services for 4 year olds.

Some low income parents receive an indirect subsidy for their fees if they use private services.

Levels of provision and how children are cared for while parents are at work

Levels of provision

Official statistics for provision in the welfare system do not identify the number of places for children under and over 3 years, only for children from 0-5 years. Since *local authority day nurseries* can take children from 0 - 5, places in these services have been split on a 50/50 basis on the assumption that they take relatively few children under 18 months. It has also been assumed that all children in publicly-funded *playgroups* (or in private *playgroups*, but paid for by local authorities) and in education services are over 3, although these services may include a small number of 2 year olds.

It should be emphasised that the consequent figures are only estimates, based on these assumptions.

Publicly-funded services for children aged 0-3 years: at the end of 1993, there were an estimated 14,000 places in *day nurseries* managed by public authorities, with a further estimated 4,500 places in private services paid for by local authorities to take children they consider to be 'in need', equivalent to about 1% of the age group. The actual figure for children, rather than places, may be nearer 2% allowing for part-time attendance of many children in *local authority day nurseries* and a small number of 2 year olds in pre-primary schooling and publicly-funded *playgroups*.

Between 1986 and 1993, the number of places in *local authority day nurseries* fell by 5,000 or 15%, although some of these places were converted into *family centres*.

Publicly-funded services for children aged 3-compulsory school-age (5 years): in 1993, there were 591,000 places for children under 5 years in the education system, over half of which were in reception classes (ie. 4 year olds attending primary school but on a voluntary basis). In addition, there were an estimated 17,000 places in *day nurseries* and *playgroups* managed by public authorities, with a further estimated 19,000 places in private services paid for by local authorities to take children they consider to be 'in need'. Based on places, therefore, there was publicly-funded provision for about 40% of the age group. However the great majority of children in *nursery education* attend on a part-time basis, so that altogether there were 790,000 children using the 591,000 places in the education system. The number of children receiving a publicly-funded place is therefore about 53% of the age group.

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Between 1986 and 1993, the number of publicly-funded places in the education system increased by 113,000 or 17%, due equally to more 4 year olds being admitted to *reception classes* and more places in *nursery education*. The number of children aged 3 and 4 years attending publicly-funded services in the education system increased by 160,000 or 25%

Publicly-funded services providing care and recreation for school-age children: there is no official information. A recent estimate from a private organisation (*Kids Clubs Network)* suggests that 'over 100,000' children attend a service or 3% of children aged 5-10 years; but it is not known what proportion of these children attend publicly-funded services.

Privately funded services: in 1993, there were 954,000 places for children aged 0-5 years in private services in the welfare system; half were in *playgroups*, just over a third with *childminders* and the rest in *day nurseries*. In addition, a further 40,000 places were provided in private schools. The number of children using these services was substantially higher than the number of places, mainly due to the widespread sharing of playgroup places. Between 1986 and 1993, the number of places increased by 270,000 or 39%. The largest increases occurred among private *day nurseries* (+337%) and *childminders* (+124%).

How children are cared for while parents are at work

A number of studies have looked at the care arrangements made for children when parents are at work. They all show that the most common arrangements are informal, that is care by a parent, relative or friend. Many mothers work part-time, and often atypical hours, to fit in with the availability of these informal care arrangements. Other women have part-time working hours that mean they only work while their children are at school. There has, however, been an increase in the use of formal services, of which the most common are *childminders*; *day nurseries* and *nannies* are much less common.

A 1991 study of the care arrangements for children under 12 shows that in 25% of cases, mothers only worked while children were at school. Of the remaining children, 51% were cared for by relatives, 37% by fathers, 15% by *childminders*, 6% by *nursery school/playgroup* and 4% by *day nursery*.

SECTION 4 - CONCLUSIONS

Developments since the late 1980s

Any review of developments since the late 1980s in the provision of services for young children in the EU must recognise three major and very specific events. First, the reunification of Germany, which brought into the EU a part of Europe with a very high level of publicly-funded provision for young children. Since 1990, that provision has reduced, partly in line with falling employment and birth rates, but it remains much higher than in West Germany or indeed most other Member States. Reunification has also brought about changes in pedagogical practice in the East, as well as a commitment to raise levels of *kindergarten* provision in the West.

Second, in 1990 Spain adopted a major reform of its whole education system, which had major implications for services for children under compulsory school-age. All of these services now come within the education system, and the age range 0-6 is recognised as the first stage of that system. Although this reform still has a long way to go before being fully implemented, Spain now provides, uniquely, a model of a country working towards a coherent care and education service for young children, integrated within the education system.

Third, the Union was joined in 1995 by three new Member States, including two Scandinavian countries, Finland and Sweden, with well developed services for young children. As well as having extensive provision, both countries, like Denmark, offer a coherent system of services for children under compulsory school-age integrated within the welfare system. Austria similarly places responsibility for all services for children under 6 in the welfare system but, like Germany, there are significant differences between provision for children under and over 3, not least in levels of provision.

General development trends are hard to discern. A number of countries (eg. Denmark, Belgium, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal and Sweden) showed substantial increases in provision in some sectors of their publicly-funded services between the late 1980s and mid-1990s, in particular either provision for children under 3 years or services providing care and recreation for school-age children. In most countries, pre-primary schooling or *kindergarten* provision for children aged 3-6 years is already high, so that there is less scope for development. An important exception was the introduction of pre-primary education in Ireland, although initially this development has been targeted on disadvantaged areas.

In most countries, the provision of services for children under 3 years and providing care and recreation for school-age children depend on local authorities and private organisations. What these high growth developments mostly have in common has been the role played by national governments or legislatures in stimulating growth. In Denmark and Sweden, national commitments were made to provide families with a right to a place for children over 12 months (before when, it is assumed they will be at home with parents taking leave), setting local

authorities a clear target to work towards. The right to a place for certain age groups of children was also introduced or extended, although not necessarily implemented, in Finland, Germany and Spain.

In France, the funding role of the family allowance funds (*CAFs)*, particularly via *contrats enfance*, has continued to be an important means of national government encouraging the development of a range of local services; this increasing source of direct support for services has been matched by increased subsidies made directly to parents to cover their costs in using services. In Luxembourg, the national government stimulates provision in a number of ways including funding agreements with private centres. In the Netherlands, the national government introduced a fixed term initiative specifically designed to boost provision; unlike the other countries, this Stimulative Measure places a high priority on individual employers matching public money and sponsoring places for members of their workforce.

One other country which has shown substantial sectoral growth has been the UK. Unlike the other examples, however, this expansion has come about mainly through growth in private, non-subsidised services, in particular private for-profit centres. However, a national initiative by Government, involving short-term public funding has also led to substantial growth in services providing care and recreation for school-age children. Most recently, by announcing a plan to expand education for 4 year olds through giving parents vouchers to exchange for public or private services, the UK has shown its continued commitment to a market approach to services.

In a few countries, the number of children attending services declined. In Italy, the number of 3-6 year olds in pre-primary schooling decreased as the child population fell, the result of very low birth rates. In Finland, the fall in attendance was the result of the economic crisis in the country after the collapse of the Soviet Union, including very high levels of unemployment. The decline in East German services has already been mentioned.

Financial pressures have also affected services. In a number of countries (eg. Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Finland, Italy, Sweden) there are examples of financial pressures either affecting the implementation of reforms or other new initiatives or forcing cuts in staffing levels.

Otherwise, we can see a number of other developments which, though not universal, have occurred in several countries and suggest issues that are of growing importance within the EU:

- a search for greater **diversity and flexibility**: (a) in services themselves, in particular expanding the range of needs they meet including greater recognition of the needs of non-employed parents and their children (Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Spain, France, Italy, Luxembourg, Finland); and (b) in the providers of services, in particular through encouraging private providers to make a greater contribution to publicly-funded services (Finland, Sweden, UK);
- encouraging more **parental involvement** and parent-run services (Denmark, Germany, France, Austria);
- improved **training** for centre-based workers and family day carers (Belgium, Denmark,

Germany, Spain, France, Ireland, Italy, Portugal, Finland, Sweden, UK);

- changes in **starting age and hours** of compulsory schooling (Finland, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Sweden, UK (Northern Ireland));
- an evolving **relationships between schools and services providing care** and recreation for school-aged children (Belgium, Denmark, Sweden);
- actual or proposed changes in **regulation** of private services, either to make regulation tighter (Belgium (French-speaking Community), Ireland, UK) or looser (Germany, Netherlands);
- expansion or development of **subsidies made direct to parents** to reduce their costs of using services (Denmark, France, Spain, UK).

Access to services

The Council Recommendation on Child-Care sets down a number of principles for services for young children: diversity and flexibility; coherence; appropriate training; and accessibility. Accessibility has a number of dimensions, including availability to children with special needs; an even geographical spread, both in urban and rural areas; and affordability. Do the Member States of the EU offer sufficient accessible services, judged against these criteria?

It must be admitted at once that this question cannot be answered. There are three reasons. **First, the basic data are inadequate**. There is no uniform system for collecting standard, comprehensive and current information on the supply, usage or demand for services for young children across the European Union. The data available vary considerably between Member States, and there are large gaps. Even within the same country, separate statistics are collected by the education and welfare system. The worst gaps come in statistics on private, non-subsidised services; there are often no published data at all[8].

Second, the basic data need interpretation; their meaning is not self evident for a number of reasons. **Demand for services** may vary between and within Member States, especially for younger children. Employment rates vary between and within Member States. Equally important, countries with well developed and widely used systems of Parental Leave are likely to have a lower demand for services for very young children (at least for services providing care while parents are at work; there may be an increased demand for services catering to the needs of parents at home on leave and their children). This effect of Parental Leave can be seen clearly in Austria, Denmark, Germany, Finland and Sweden. For example, Denmark provides publicly-funded services for nearly 50% of children under 3, but its recently extended Parental Leave will have reduced demand very substantially for children under 12 months - so that the 50% coverage of children aged 0-3 years is probably, in effect, nearer 70% coverage for children aged 1-3 years.

[8]For a fuller discussion of existing statistics and how these might be improved, see EX Childcare Network (1994) *Monitoring Childcare Services*, Brussels, European Commission Equal Opportunities Unit.

Demand for more formal services may also be affected by the **availability of informal care** arrangements, in particular grandparents and other relatives. Because of the neglect of this important resource, we have no way of knowing either how far the supply of informal carers varies from place to place nor whether this supply is changing over time.

The **volume of services** on offer also needs to be taken into account. Simple counts of the number of children attending services or the places available miss this critical dimension. In particular, services in the welfare system are generally open for much longer each year than places in the education system; each place in the welfare system therefore provides a higher volume of service than a corresponding place in the education system.

Comparison of Denmark and the UK provides the most extreme example of difference in volume. The most common forms of provision for 3 and 4 year olds in the UK are *playgroups* and pre-primary schooling. These types of provision are only open during term-time (for 40 weeks a year) and for limited hours each week; many children attend for less than these weekly opening hours, often on a shift basis, and typically for 13 hours a week or less (or about 525 hours a year). By contrast, the main forms of provision for the same age group in Denmark are open throughout the year and normally for about 50 hours a week; children attend on average for about 35 hours a week (or over 1500 hours a year). In other words, a place in Denmark provides a much higher volume of service than a place in the UK, and the difference is even greater if the service available to individual children is considered.

Another, and most intractable, problem of interpreting cross-national statistics is to take account of **differences in quality**. We have no means of knowing whether a place in Country x is of the same quality as a place in Country z - either based on some common understanding of quality or in terms of how that place rates against standards specific to its own country. One aspect of quality may be the ability of services to accommodate children with a full range of special needs, but again we have no means of telling how far services in each country are genuinely accessible to all children, although many countries now emphasise the need for general services to provide for children with disabilities and other special needs.

Last but not least, we have no means of knowing to what extent the subsidies available to parents in most Member States (as opposed to subsidies paid direct to services) ensure access to affordable, good quality services, not least because the subsidies either do not cover all parents and/or cover less than half of the costs paid by parents.

Figure 6 and Table 6 compare publicly-funded provision between Member States (excluding Luxembourg, due to inadequate information) for **children aged 0-3 years** and **3-6 years**. Publicly-funded services for **children aged aged 6-10** years are only presented in Table 6 because there are too many qualifications for the information to be included adequately in Figure 6. **Common age ranges have been applied** across all Member States to improve comparability, even though these age ranges are more appropriate for some Member States than others (for example, 6 years is the start of compulsory schooling in most Member States - but not all).

Figure 6 and Table 6 are **limited to publicly-funded services** because of the very inadequate data on private, non-subsidised services (both formal and informal) and because this provides the best indication of the affordability of services and therefore to what degree there is equal access to services. **Both Figure 6 and Table 6 must be read in the light of the qualifications outlined above and in the note attached to Table 6, and in conjunction with the more detailed information on 'levels of provision' to be found in each national profile.**

Figure 6
Levels of Publicly-funded Services for Young Children: 1991-94

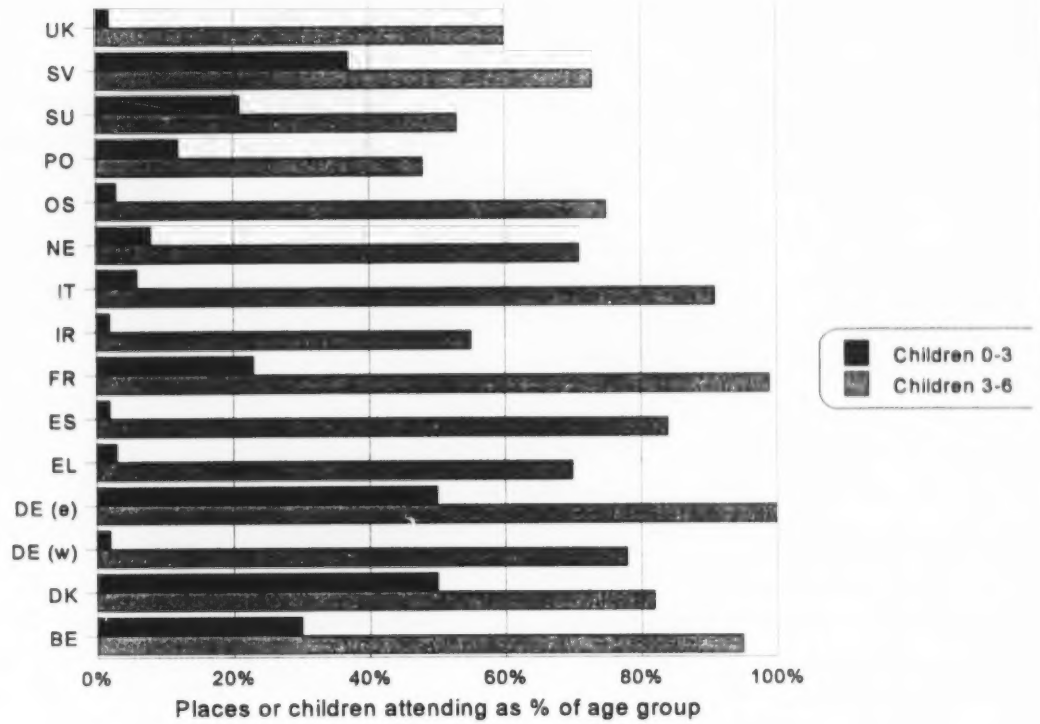

Figure 6 and Table 6 show that, overall, publicly-funded services are most developed in Denmark and Sweden, followed by France; while, overall, publicly-funded services are least developed in Ireland, Greece, Spain and the UK. There are wide variations in levels of publicly-funded provision, especially for **children under 3 years**, although everywhere provision for this age group is lower than for children over 3. Four main policies concerning the care of children under 3 can be identified, which help to make sense of the substantial national variations.

In several countries, the explicit policy aim is to enable parents to have choice between employment and caring for children under 3 at home - through the development of public

measures that will support either option. Thus France is developing both services for children under 3 **and** a 3 year period of Parental Leave. Finland has gone even further; every child under 3 has a right to a place in a publicly-funded service while at the same time families are entitled to receive financial an entitlement or commitment to provide publicly-funded provision, support to care for their children either at home or in private services. These countries therefore combine long periods of leave with relatively high levels of services (see Figure 5 and Table 5 for details of Parental Leave).

In the UK, the explicit policy aim is also choice - but unlike France and Finland, that choice is viewed as a purely private matter with the State having no direct interest in the reconciliation of employment and family responsibilities. Public policy is to remain neutral as between employment or caring for children at home by providing no public measures to support either option. Hence the UK has a situation shared only by Ireland of no entitlement to Parental Leave **and** no access for employed parents to a limited supply of publicly-funded services. Employed parents needing care for their children must make private arrangements.

In Denmark and Sweden, the policy is that parents should take a period of leave when children are under 12-15 months, after which their participation in the labour market should be supported through services and other means. In both cases, there is a combination of paid leave of moderate length, followed by extensive provision of publicly-funded services to which employed parents have a right of access once their children are over 12 months.

The fourth aim of policy is to encourage a parent, invariably the mother, to remain at home until children reach the age of 3 years. In this case, there is a long period of leave and low levels of publicly-funded services. This pattern can be seen in the former West Germany (policy in the former East Germany before reunification was closer to Denmark and Sweden) and in Austria.

Figure 6 and Table 6 show that most Member States have achieved or are moving towards comprehensive coverage for **children aged 3-6 years** either in pre-primary schooling or *kindergarten*. Within the EU, there is a convergence around the provision of three years of publicly-funded provision prior to compulsory schooling at 6 (or, in the Scandinavian countries, 7).The main exceptions to this picture are Ireland, the Netherlands and the UK, which combine early admission to primary school (from 4 onwards) with limited or no pre-primary schooling.

However, with the exception of the Scandinavian countries, pre-primary schooling or *kindergarten* is not generally organised to take account of the needs of employed parents, nor is compulsory schooling in any country. Hence the importance of **services providing care and recreation for school-age children (including 3-6 years).** Levels of provision in these services vary considerably between Member States, and are generally far lower than pre-primary schooling or *kindergarten*.

The gap between supply and demand is greatest for services for children under 3 and for services providing care and recreation for school-age children. Many of the personal assessments in the

national profiles refer to shortages of provision. The one exception is Finland where due to very specific economic circumstances it is estimated that there was a net over-supply of places of 4,300 places in 1993 for children aged 0-6 years.

Finally, as well as variations in the supply of services at Member State level, there are substantial **variations at regional or local levels**, and therefore inequalities in access, again mainly in services for children under 3 and in services providing care and recreation for school-age children. Although not systematically documented in this review, these variations are mentioned in reports from several individual Network members (eg. Belgium, Germany, Spain, Italy, Austria, the UK), and in practice probably occur in nearly all Member States. One reason for this variability is that these two areas of provision are usually the responsibility of local or regional authorities, who vary in their willingness or ability to fund services; pre-primary schooling or *kindergarten* is more likely either to involve national government in its provision or to be the subject of national policy objectives.

Coherence in services for young children

Services for young children vary between Member States on a number of dimensions. There is the **relative contribution of formal and informal provision**, the former covering schools and other centres, family day care and other services offered for payment, the latter mainly covering arrangements with relatives and friends who offer their services for a specific child. The level of informal provision is a function of several factors, including the supply of informal carers (how many relatives etc are available and able to provide a service), the supply of formal services, the demand for services and the structure of the labour market.

In general, the relative contribution of informal services falls as levels of employment and formal services increase. For example, informal services play a much more limited role in Denmark and Sweden compared to many other countries. This could be for various reasons, including: the increase in parental employment outstripping the supply of relatives prepared to provide care; decreasing supply if employment rates are also increasing among female relatives; parents' preference for formal services when on offer; or many relatives only offering their services in a situation where there is a shortage of formal services.

At the other extreme, informal arrangements play a significant role in a country like the UK, where formal services are less available (and if available, usually non-subsidised). The labour market also offers a large number of part-time jobs, many involving short hours and evening, night or week-end working which are taken mainly by women with young children; care arrangements, in these cases, depend on a combination of short and often atypical hours of work and the use of informal arrangements. In some cases this pattern may reflect a real preference; in other cases, hours of work are tailored to the limited, informal care options available.

Within the formal sector of services, a second dimension is **the balance between subsidised and non-subsidised services**. There are different means and sources of subsidy: direct subsidy of services and various ways of subsidising parents; and subsidies from various public agencies and

employers. The largest element of subsidy in most countries comes through the education system, in funding compulsory schooling and pre-primary schooling. However, in Denmark, Finland and Sweden, the largest element of subsidy comes through the welfare system. The highest level of direct subsidy to parents is in France, which also makes high levels of public subsidy direct to services. Overall, highest levels of public subsidy are in these four countries.

Subsidy by employers can be made by individual employers or as a general contribution made by all employers. Two countries - France and Belgium - have general contributions, the former as a part of the statutory charge on all employers, the latter as part of a contribution agreed between social partners. In the Netherlands, the Stimulative Measure introduced by the Government involves a strategy of providing an incentive to individual employers to subsidise places for members of their workforce, and a high proportion of new places include these employer subsidies. The element of employer subsidy is therefore likely to be highest in these three countries, but through different mechanisms.

Elsewhere, there has been considerable interest in individual employers subsidising services in several countries (eg. Germany, Ireland and the UK) and some notable examples of individual employers who have taken initiatives. It is unlikely, however, that this source of subsidy has been significant, either in absolute terms or in terms of the proportion of parents assisted in this way. It also raises issues about access to services, since subsidies depending on decisions by individual employers are more likely to reflect their labour supply needs than the needs of children or parents.

A third dimension of variation between Member States is **the relationship between the welfare and education systems**. In all countries, the education system provides compulsory schooling for part of the age range covered by this review. The most common age for compulsory schooling to start is 6, but in 3 cases it is earlier (Luxembourg, Netherlands, UK) and in 3 cases (Denmark, Finland, Sweden) it is 7.

For children below compulsory school-age, **the education system** plays an important role in providing services in many countries; the main exceptions are the 3 Scandinavian countries and Germany and Austria. In the other Member States, the education system contributes services in two ways - pre-primary schooling and early admission to primary schooling - and every country, except the Netherlands, has some 'pre-primary schooling'. This schooling is usually a universal service, or intended to become so, with the exception of Ireland where the recent development of this form of provision is targeted on specified disadvantaged areas. In Ireland, the Netherlands and the UK, many children are admitted into primary school before compulsory school-age, from the age of 4.

In a few countries (eg. Belgium, Denmark and Sweden), some services providing care and recreation for school-aged children are also provided within the education system, in which case they are school-based, rather than being in independent centres.

The other publicly-funded services for young children are provided within **the welfare system**, where they are the responsibility of social welfare or health authorities. In all countries, these services are provided in centres, while in some countries, they are also provided by individual family day carers, who are recruited, paid and supported by public authorities or publicly-funded private organisations, ie. organised family day care.

Access to services in the welfare system varies. The Scandinavian countries view these services as universal, available to all children; Germany has also recently recognised that children over 3 should have a right of admission to kindergartens. Elsewhere, provision is prioritised. This may be because there are insufficient places to meet demand; generally there are far fewer places in welfare system services than education system services. In the case of Ireland and the UK, however, public provision of services is limited to children and families in social need as a matter of deliberate policy. In these two countries, therefore, children with employed parents are not prioritised for admission to publicly-funded services; elsewhere they are.

Publicly-funded services in the welfare system may be provided by public authorities (usually local authorities) or by private organisations; the actual balance between these forms of management varies between countries. In some countries (eg. Italy, Sweden), the great majority of provision is delivered by local authorities; in other countries (eg. Ireland, Netherlands), all provision is delivered by private organisations; elsewhere (eg. Denmark, Germany), there is a greater mix. By contrast, services in the education system are in most cases delivered by public authorities - national, regional or local authorities.

The final dimension concerns the **degree of coherence** among services for children below compulsory school-age. This dimension is particularly important since the principle of coherence has been recognised by Member States in their adoption of the Recommendation on Child Care. It is closely related to whether these services are divided between separate systems or integrated into one system.

In most Member States, services for children below compulsory school-age are divided between the education and welfare system. In a few cases (eg. Italy, Netherlands), there is no overlap between the two systems in terms of the age groups of children for whom they provide. In most cases (eg. Belgium, France, Ireland, Portugal, UK) there is an overlap, with the different systems providing services to the same age group of children - 2 year olds in the case of Belgium and France, over 3s in the other countries.

By contrast, in the Scandinavian countries services for young children up to 6 years are integrated in one system. This is the welfare system, but the objective is to provide a universal service. All 3 countries have a commitment to provide services for all children from 1-6 years (with Parental Leave providing for children under 1). For an increasing number of 6 year olds, there is part-time pre-primary schooling provided within the education and/or welfare systems; many of these children also use services providing care and recreation for school-age children.

The division of formal services for young children between welfare and education systems creates differences and inequalities - a lack of coherence - between these services. To take just three examples:

- parents make a financial contribution to the cost of publicly-funded services in the welfare system, but services in the education system are free of charge;
- unlike welfare system services, pre-primary schooling is not available on a full-day, all year basis;
- while levels of staffing in welfare system services are higher than in the education system, levels of training for staff are lower.

Scandinavian countries are unique in having a system of services for children under 6 which is integrated and coherent. There is a common approach to policy, law, administration, funding, cost to parents, social and pedagogical objectives, opening hours and staffing across all services; this common system has encouraged widespread provision of age-integrated services for children from 1-6 years, and sometimes older. Elsewhere in Europe, the division between welfare and education systems produces major differences - or lack of coherence - between services in the two systems in all those areas where there is a common approach in the Scandinavian countries.

Two other countries have all services within one system, but have not achieved a coherent system of provision. In Germany, all services are within the welfare system, and there are some common features between services for children under and over 3; however, there are also major differences, not least in levels of provision and opening hours at least in West Germany (these are much less apparent in East Germany). In Spain, a major reform of the education system in 1990 brought all services for children aged 0-6 within the education system and recognised them as the first stage of education. The reform law provides a framework for the development of an integrated and coherent education-based system; in practice, however, there is still some way to go before this objective is fully realised.

This division between education and welfare systems is becoming harder to justify as increasing numbers of parents are employed and as services in the welfare system of many countries have increasingly recognised that they have a pedagogical role as well as a care role. However, there has not been a corresponding movement in most education systems to recognise the wider functions that schools do or might perform, in addition to education. Even where services for children below compulsory school-age are coherent, there is no guarantee that the relationship between these services and the compulsory school system will be coherent; the fault-line between services may be located at the compulsory school-age rather than running through services for younger children. Looking ahead, the relationship between a coherent system of services for children below compulsory school-age, the compulsory school system and the system of services providing care and recreation for school-age children provides a major challenge in all Member States.

The development of a coherent and integrated system of services goes beyond issues of structure and organisation. It deals centrally with the concept of services - who and what they are for. A

coherent and integrated service should be more able to adopt a holistic approach to the needs of children and their families, recognising the breadth and inter-connectedness of these needs, and the importance of developing an approach to meeting these needs which is flexible and multi-functional.

Training

The Council Recommendation on Child Care emphasises the need for staff working in services for young children to have training that is *"appropriate to the importance and the social and educative value of their work"*. There is a large body of research which points to the importance of training in determining the quality of services.

At present there is a very wide range of basic training among workers in services for young children. At one end of the spectrum, there are groups who have 3 or more years post-18 training at a higher education institution. At the other end of the spectrum are groups with no training at all or only low levels (1-2 years at a post-16 level).

In countries with an integrated system of services for children below compulsory school-age, staff with the same basic training work in centres with children both under and over 3 (eg. the Scandinavian countries, Germany, Austria, Spain), usually with assistants who have lower level training or no training. This basic training is relatively high and has been further enhanced in the period covered by this review in Denmark, Sweden, Finland and Spain.

The same is also true of Portugal, where staff in welfare and education system services have a common training (although not the same conditions of employment). Elsewhere, however, there are differences in the level of basic training between workers in services in the education and welfare systems (eg. Belgium, France, Italy, Ireland, the Netherlands, UK). The former have a longer and higher level training (and also higher pay and shorter hours of work) and are only trained to work with children from 3-6 years (or in the case of the UK from 3-8 or 10 years). One consequence of this situation is that lowest levels of training are found among workers who provide services for children under 3.

Family day carers, who play a major role in providing services for children under 3, have the poorest training levels of all, well below that found among centre-based staff. Only Finland, France and Portugal require this group of workers - either all family day carers or those recruited to organised family day care schemes - to take some training.

This situation raises four main issues. First, is it appropriate to have lower levels of training for staff working with children under 3 and in welfare system services? Second, what degree of age specialism should there be in training and what should be the basis for specialism? Should workers, and their training, specialise in working with children from 0-6, 3-6, 3-8 or 0-8 - or some other age range? Third, what levels of training should be required for workers in non-subsidised private services, including family day carers, and can the costs of training be assimilated within a non-subsidised system without further reducing access?

The fourth issue concerns the nature of the work itself. Should workers in services with young children be trained to have a specialist role, for example as a teacher of young children? Or should they be trained to undertake a wider role, covering a range of tasks with children, parents and the local community? Again the concept of services is critical. A multi-functional services, responsive to the needs of children, families and local communities, will require staff with a wide-ranging training. A service addressing only one need (eg. care or education) will require a specialist with exclusive training in that area.

Finally, it is noticeable that staffing levels vary considerably between Member States at present (as well as between services in the welfare and education systems of the same country). It is only in the context of defining the concept of service, the role of the workers and the appropriate level of training that levels of staffing can be defined.

APPENDIX

Table 1
Employment status of women and men with child aged 0-10 years[9]: 1985-1993

Country	Employment Status							
	Mothers				Fathers			
	Total	(FT / PT)	Unem	EcIn	Total	(FT / PT)	Unem	EcIn
BE								
1985	**51**	**(37 / 14)**	**15**	**34**	**92**	**(92 / 1)**	**5**	**2**
1993	**62**	**(38 / 24)**	**9**	**29**	**92**	**(91 / 1)**	**4**	**4**
Change	*+11*	*(+1/+10)*	*-6*	*-5*	*-**	*(-1 / +1)*	*-2*	*+2*
DK								
1985	**76**	**(43 / 33)**	**9**	**15**	**95**	**(93 / 1)**	**2**	**3**
1993	**74**	**(49 / 25)**	**10**	**15**	**88**	**(86 / 2)**	**6**	**6**
Change	*- 2*	*(+7/ -8)*	*+1*	*+1*	*-7*	*(-7 / +*)*	*+4*	*+3*
DE (W)								
1985	**35**	**(17 / 18)**	**6**	**59**	**94**	**(93 / 1)**	**4**	**2**
1993	**46**	**(18 / 28)**	**4**	**49**	**93**	**(91 / 2)**	**4**	**3**
Change	*+11*	*(+1 /+10)*	*-2*	*-10*	*-1*	*(-2 / +1)*	*-**	*+1*
DE (O)								
1993	**69**	**(55 / 14)**	**19**	**11**	**90**	**(89 / 1)**	**7**	**3**
DE(W/O)								
1993	**51**	**(26 / 25)**	**8**	**41**	**92**	**(91 / 1)**	**5**	**3**
EL								
1985	**37**	**(32 / 5)**	**5**	**58**	**94**	**(93 / 2)**	**3**	**3**
1993	**44**	**(40 / 3)**	**7**	**49**	**95**	**(93 / 1)**	**3**	**2**
Change	*+7*	*(+9/ -2)*	*+2*	*- 9*	*+**	*(+1/ -*)*	*-**	*-**
ES								
1988	**28**	**(23 / 4)**	**10**	**63**	**89**	**(88 / 1)**	**8**	**3**
1993	**35**	**(29/ 6)**	**14**	**52**	**85**	**(84 / 1)**	**12**	**3**
Change	*+7*	*(+6/+2)*	*+4*	*-11*	*-4*	*(-4/ -)*	*+4*	*-*

[9]Except Austria, where information is for parents with children under 15 years; and Sweden, where information is for parents with children under 7 years.

FR								
1985	**54**	**(41 / 14)**	**8**	**38**	**93**	**(92 / 1)**	**5**	**2**
1993	**59**	**(40 / 19)**	**11**	**30**	**90**	**(88/ 2)**	**8**	**3**
Change	*+5*	*(-*/ 5)*	*+3*	*-8*	*-3*	*(-3/ +*)*	*+3*	*+1*
IR								
1985	**19**	**(13 / 6)**	**7**	**74**	**80**	**(79 / 1)**	**16**	**4**
1993	**35**	**(24 / 10)**	**8**	**57**	**81**	**(78 / 2)**	**13**	**7**
Change	*+16*	*(+11/ +5)*	*+1*	*-17*	*+1*	*(-1/ +2)*	*-3*	*+3*
IT								
1985	**38**	**(34 / 4)**	**5**	**57**	**97**	**(95 / 2)**	**2**	**2**
1993	**43**	**(37 / 6)**	**6**	**51**	**93**	**(91 / 1)**	**4**	**3**
Change	*+5*	*(+3/+2)*	*+1*	*- 6*	*-4*	*(-4/ -*)*	*+2*	*+2*
LX								
1985	**34**	**(25 / 9)**	**2**	**64**	**98**	**(97 / *)**	**1**	**2**
1993	**42**	**(29 / 13)**	**3**	**54**	**93**	**(93 / *)**	**3**	**3**
Change	*+8*	*(+4/+4)*	*+1*	*- 9*	*-4*	*(-4 / *)*	*+2*	*+2*
NE								
1985	**23**	**(4 / 19)**	**5**	**71**	**90**	**(85 /4)**	**7**	**3**
1993	**46**	**(6 / 41)**	**5**	**49**	**92**	**(85 /7)**	**3**	**5**
Change	*+23*	*(+2/+22)*	*-**	*-23*	*+2*	*(-*/+2)*	*-3*	*+2*
OS								
1993	**64**	**(40 / 24)**	**??**	**??**	**97**	**(?? /??)**	**??**	**??**
PO								
1988	**62**	**(56 / 6)**	**6**	**33**	**95**	**(93 /1)**	**2**	**3**
1993	**70**	**(63 / 7)**	**5**	**25**	**95**	**(93 /1)**	**3**	**3**
Change	*+8*	*(+7 /+1)*	*-1*	*-8*	*-*	*(- / -)*	*+1*	*-*
SU								
1993	**65**	**(57 / 8)**	**12**	**23**	**80**	**(77 /3)**	**15**	**6**
SV								
1993	**75**	**(35 / 40)**	**7**	**19**	**85**	**(82/ 3)**	**8**	**7**
UK								
1985	**38**	**(10 / 28)**	**10**	**52**	**85**	**(84 /1)**	**12**	**3**
1993	**53**	**(18 / 35)**	**6**	**41**	**84**	**(82 /2)**	**11**	**5**
Change	*+14*	*(+8/ +7)*	*-4*	*-11*	*-1*	*(-2/+1)*	*-1*	*+2*

EU [excl. OS,SU, SV] 1993	**50 (30 / 20) 8 41**	**90 (88 /2) 7 4**

Key to Table 1:

- **FT**= employed full-time.
- **PT** = employed part-time.
- **Unem** = unemployed.
- **EcIn** = Economically inactive.
- * = less than 0.5.
- ?? = no information.

Table 2
Employment rate for mothers by age of youngest child: 1991, 1993

Country	Age of youngest child	% employed		Difference in % employed between women with youngest child 3-10 and 0-3	
		1991	1993	1991	1993
BE	0-3 years	56	62		
	3-10 years	60	62	+ 6	< 0.5%
DK	0-3 years	72	70		
	3-10 years	75	78	+ 3	+ 8
DE	0-3 years	??	40		
	3-10 years	??	58	??	+18
EL	0-3 years	40	40		
	3-10 years	45	46	+ 5	+ 6
ES	0-3 years	30	33		
	3-10 years	33	35	+ 3	+ 2
FR	0-3 years	52	52		
	3-10 years	61	64	+ 9	+11
IR	0-3 years	31	38		
	3-10 years	25	33	- 6	- 6
IT	0-3 years	42	42		
	3-10 years	44	43	+ 2	+ 1
NE	0-3 years	35	45		
	3-10 years	39	48	+ 4	+ 3
PO	0-3 years	62	69		
	3-10 years	65	71	+ 3	+ 2
UK	0-3 years	38	44		
	3-10 years	60	59	+22	+16
EU [excl. OS,SU,SV]	0-3 years		45		
	3-10 years		54	??	+ 9

NB. Luxembourg is not included because of the small numbers in the LFS sample.

❑ ?? = no information

Table 3
Level of part-time employment and hours usually worked per week: 1985, 1993

Country		% of employed parents in part-time jobs		Hours usually worked per week - average for:			
		1985	1993	A	B	C	D
BE	Mothers	27	39	38.4	21.0	31.3	19.5
	Fathers	1	1	40.9	22.7	40.1	37.4
DK	Mothers	44	34	38,1	26.1	34.0	25.2
	Fathers	1	2	41.3	19.0	40.8	35.9
DE	Mothers	??	49	40.6	19.2	30.2	15.4
	Fathers	??	2	41.7	20.6	41.4	38.2
EL	Mothers	14	8	40.8	24.3	39.6	17.3
	Fathers	2	1	45.5	30.1	45.3	42.9
ES	Mothers	??	14	40.3	18.5	36.8	12.7
	Fathers	??	1	42.7	21.4	42.5	36.1
FR	Mothers	25	32	39.1	23.6	34.2	20.2
	Fathers	1	2	42.4	24.4	42.0	37.8
IR	Mothers	30	30	37.7	18.4	32.0	11.2
	Fathers	1	3	46.6	22.0	46.0	37.0
IT	Mothers	11	15	36.0	23.3	34.2	14.7
	Fathers	2	1	41.6	33.4	41.4	38.4
LX	Mothers	26	26	38.9	19.4	33.0	13.8
	Fathers	*	*	42.8	19.0	42.7	39.9
NE	Mothers	83	88	41.1	16.1	19.1	8.9
	Fathers	5	7	42.0	26.9	40.9	37.6
PO	Mothers	??	10	41.4	24.4	39.8	28.0
	Fathers	??	1	45.4	33.6	45.2	42.9
UK	Mothers	74	66	40.2	16.5	24.5	12.9
	Fathers	1	2	47.6	19.2	47.0	39.6
EU [excl. OS,SU, SV]	Mothers	??	40	39.2	19.2	31.2	15.8
	Fathers	??	2	43.6	24.6	42.7	38.3

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Key to table 3:

- **Column A** gives the average of hours per week usually worked by mothers/fathers with full-time jobs.
- **Column B** gives the average of hours per week usually worked by mothers/fathers with part-time jobs.
- **Column C** gives the average of hours per week usually worked by all employed mothers/fathers (ie. part-time and full-time employed).
- **Column D** gives total hours of employment usually worked per week by mothers/fathers divided by all mothers/fathers, whether employed or not.
- * = numbers in the sample are too small to calculate.
- ?? = no information.

Table 4
Births, child population (1993) and lone parent families (1990-91)

	Total Fertility Rate	Child Population 0-4	Child Population 5-9	Mean age of women at child-bearing	Lone Parent Families as % all families
BE	1.59	620,600	593,000	28.1	15%
DK	1.75	322,100	278,200	28.9	20%
DE	1.28	4,385,800	4,476,800	28.1	15% [West]
EL	1.34	525,500	599,100	27.8	6%
ES	1.26	1,973,500	2,209,700	29.3	6%
FR	1.65	3,708,700	3,817,000	28.7	11%
IR	1.93	265,200	303,000	30.3	11%
IT	1.22	2,778,800	2,808,000	29.4	6%
LX	1.7	26,000	23,200	28.6	12%
NE	1.57	976,900	921,700	29.8	12%
OS	1.48	474,700	463,000	27.4	20% [1993]
PO	1.52	554,800	578,300	27.7	9%
SU	1.81	325,600	317,100	29.0	
SV	1.99	606,100	521,200	29.0	19% [1992-3]
UK	1.75	3,888,000	3,773,300	27.9	19%
EU15	1.46	21,432,400	21,682,400	28.6	

Table 5
Statutory leave for workers with children

BE	**ML** **PatL** **PL** **LFR**	8-14 weeks; 3 days; None, but universal system of 6-12 month 'career breaks' per worker subject to employer agreement available for any reason including care of young children; 10 days per parent (public sector), 4 days (private sector). Payment for ML and PatL is earnings-related; 'career break' is paid at flat-rate. LFR is unpaid
DK	**ML** **PatL** **PL** **LFR**	14 weeks; 2 weeks; 10 weeks, family entitlement[10]+3 months per parent (or 6 months if taken before child is 12 months)+another 6-9 months per parent with employer agreement; None. All paid at flat rate.
DE	**ML** **PatL** **PL** **LFR**	8 weeks; None; Until child reaches 36 months, family entitlement; 10 days per parent for 1 child, 25 days per parent if 2 or more children. Payment for ML and LFR at full earnings; payment for PL at flat-rate until child is 24 months and means-tested
EL	**ML** **PatL** **PL** **LFR**	7-11 weeks (18-22 weeks for third or later birth); None; 3 months per parent; 6-10 days per family depending on the number of children in the family. Payment for ML at full earnings; PL and LFR unpaid.

[10]'Family entitlement' means that the entitlement to leave is for the family, rather than being a separate entitlement for each parent, and may be divided between the parents as they choose.

ES	**ML** **PatL** **PL** **LFR**	6-16 weeks; 2 days; Until child is 36 months, family entitlement; 2 days per parent per illness. Payment at full earnings except PL which is unpaid.
FR	**ML** **PatL** **PL** **LFR**	10-12 weeks (18-22 weeks for third or later birth); 3 days; Until child reaches 36 months, family entitlement; 3 days per parent (increasing to 5 if parent has child under 3 years or 3 or more children). Payment for ML is earnings-related; PL is paid at flat-rate for parents with two or more children; PatL and LFR is unpaid.
IR	**ML** **PatL** **PL** **LFR**	4-14 weeks; None; None; None. Payment for ML is earnings-related except for last optional 4 weeks which are unpaid.
IT	**ML** **PatL** **PL** **LFR**	3 months; None; 6 months, mother's entitlement which can be transferred to father; Leave may be taken until a child reaches the age of 3. Payment for ML at high earnings-related rate; payment for PL at low earnings-related rate; LFR unpaid.
LX	**ML** **PatL** **PL** **LFR**	8 weeks; None; None; None. Payment for ML at full earnings
NE	**ML** **PatL** **PL** **LFR**	10-12 weeks; None; 6 months per parent of part-time leave; None. Payment for ML at full earnings; PL is unpaid.

OS	**ML** **PatL** **PL** **LFR**	8 weeks (+extra for multiple/premature births); 3 days; Until child is 24 months, family entitlement, with 12 months part-time option; 2 weeks per parent. Payment at full earnings, except PL which is paid at flat-rate, with supplement for single parents/low income families
PO	**ML** **PatL** **PL** **LFR**	60-98 days; None; 6-24 months per family; 30 days leave per year if child under 10. Payment for ML at full earnings. PL and LFR is unpaid
SU	**ML** **PatL** **PL** **LFR**	9½ - 12½ weeks; 2 weeks; Until child is 36 months, family entitlement + 1 parent may work reduced hours until the end of the year when child starts compulsory school; 4 days if child becomes suddenly ill. Payment is earnings-related, except for part of PL (after child is about 10 months) where the payment is flat rate and LFR which is unpaid
SV	**ML** **PatL** **PL** **LFR**	None; 10 days; 18 months per parent, including a family entitlement to 450 days of paid leave to be taken until child is 8 years and on full-time, half-time or quarter-time basis (30 of the 450 days is for the mother, 30 days for the father, the rest divided between the parents as they choose) + each parent may work reduced hours until the child is 8 years; 120 days per family per child up to age 12 years. Payment is earnings-related, except for the last 90 days of paid PL where the payment is flat-rate, and PL over the 450 days of paid leave and reduced hours which are both unpaid.
UK	**ML** **PatL** **PL** **LFR**	29 weeks; None; None; None. Most of ML paid at low flat-rate or unpaid; short period paid at high earnings-related level.

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Key to Table 5:

- **ML** = Maternity Leave (after birth);
- **PatL** = Paternity Leave;
- **PL** = Parental Leave;
- **LFR** = Leave for Family Reasons

Note on Table 5 and Figure 5

Statutory leave arrangements may be enhanced for some groups of workers by collective agreements or company policies. For example, in Denmark all workers have the right to take leave on the first day of a child's illness and public sector workers and many private sector workers receive full pay for Maternity, Paternity and Parental Leaves as a result of collective agreements.

Table 6
Provision of publicly-funded services in Member States

	A	B	C	D	Provision in publicly-funded services for children aged (years): 0-3	3-6	6-10
BE	27	**	6	93	30%	95%+	??
DK	30	**	7	94	48%	82%	62%+all 6 year olds in pre-primary education
DE	36	*	6	90	2%(W) 50%(E)	78%(W) 100%(E)	5% (W) 88% (E)
EL	9	**	6	93	#3%	#70%(a)	?<5%
ES	36	*	6	93	?2%	84%	??
FR	36	**	6	93	23%	99%	?30%
IR	3		6	93	2%	55%	?<5%
IT	9		6	91	6%	91%	??
NE	15	**	5	93	#8%(a)	#71%(a)	?<5%
OS	24		6	94	3%	75%	6%
PO	27		6	93	12%	48%	10%
SU	36		7	94	21%	53%	5%+60% of 6 year olds in welfare and education system services
SV	36		7	94	33%	72%	64%+some 6 year olds in pre-primary schooling
UK	7	*	5	93	2%	#60%(a)	??<5%

Key to Table 6:

- **Column A** gives the length of Maternity Leave + Parental Leave in months available per family after the birth of each child; see Table 5 for details on payment to parents taking leave.
- **Column B** indicates whether subsidies are available to parents (in addition to subsidies paid direct to services) to cover part of their costs for using services for young children. * = subsidy available to lower income parents only; ** = subsidy available to some/all parents, irrespective of income.

- **Column C** shows the age at which compulsory schooling begins.
- **Column D** shows to what year the figures in the next three columns refer.
- **(a)** - figure includes some children in compulsory schooling (ie. where compulsory schooling begins before 6).

  ?? - no information.

  ?<5% - no information but under 5%.

  ? - approximate figure.

  # - important qualification, see **Note on Table 6 and Figure 6** below.

Note on Table 6 and Figure 6

The age of compulsory schooling is relevant because it affects the figures given for services for children aged 3-6 years. As well as services in the welfare system, these services include: pre-primary schooling; early admission to primary school; **and children attending compulsory schooling** (in the case of countries where compulsory schooling begins before 6). However, the column for services for children aged 6-10 years **does not include children in compulsory schooling**; it is confined to services providing care and recreation to school-aged children.

It should be noted that for Member States where compulsory schooling age is not 6, there may be some differences between the figures shown in Table 6 and Figure 6, which are for services for children aged **3-6 years**, and the figures shown in the **Levels of Provision** boxes in Section 3, which are for children between **3 years and compulsory school-age**.

Countries (or even different systems within the same country) vary in whether they collect data on 'places available' or 'children attending'. Figure 6 and Table 6 reflect this mix of data. They give information on:

- **places available** for: Belgium and France (for children aged 0-3 years, except for 2 year olds in pre-primary schooling); Germany; Italy (for children aged 0-3); Netherlands; Portugal; UK;

and information on:

- **children attending** for: Belgium and France (2 year olds in pre-primary schooling and 3-6); Denmark; Greece; Spain; Ireland; Italy (for children aged 3-6); Austria; Finland; Sweden.

The two measures will not differ significantly when all or nearly all 'places available'are used full-time and if there are few or no vacancies. However, in some services in some countries a significant number of places are used on a part-time basis and, in effect, shared by two children; in these cases, data on 'children' attending will significantly over-state the 'places available' and the volume of services supplied. The difference between 'places available' and 'children attending' is significant in services in the welfare system in Ireland, the Netherlands and the UK and in pre-primary schooling in the UK. In these cases, 'places available' data (actual or estimated) rather than 'children attending' data have been used in Figure 6 and Table 6 where

available (ie. for the UK and Netherlands). Readers should refer to the **Levels of provision** box in the respective national profiles to see how estimates have been arrived at.

Two final qualifications need to be made about Figure 6 and Table 6. The first concerns information on services in the welfare system for Greece, the Netherlands and the UK. These countries do not produce statistics for children aged 0-3 and 3-6; in Greece, statistics are for children aged 0-2½-5½ years, in the Netherlands for children aged 0-4 years and in the UK for children aged 0-5 years. Again, readers should refer to the **Levels of provision** box in the respective national profiles to see how estimates for children aged 0-3 and 3-6 years have been arrived at, and remember that the figures in Table 6 and Figure 6 are estimates.

The second qualification concerns the definition of 'publicly-funded'. In nearly all cases, this means that more than half of the total costs of a service are paid from public sources, and usually between 75% and 100%. The main exception to this is the Netherlands, where public funding usually covers less than half the costs of services in the welfare system. The Netherlands figure for publicly-funded provision also excludes *peuterspeelzalen* [see Netherlands glossary - (d)]. Although most places in this form of provision receive some public funds, average hours of opening and attendance are so much shorter than for other services that it would be potentially misleading to include information on them either for 'children attending' or 'places available'.